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the COMIC READER

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The COMIC READER
January 1982
Volume 1, Number 198

OUR COVERS: Mike Vosburg and Mitch O'Connell contribute two of Marvel's patriotic characters in opposite emotional states; Nick Fury's obviously working up quite a sweat. (And if things work out, the color should look kinda strange, though good. We're crossing our fingers.) Nick Fury, Val, Captain America and the Red Skull, © 1981 Marvel Comics Group. All rights reserved.

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DC News

DC has taken what is an unprecedented step in the field of comic books. They will henceforth be paying royalties to the creative personnel on their comics of 5% on every copy sold over 100,000 copies. This 5% will be split amongst the writer, penciller and inker only, with cover artists, letterers, colorists and editors precluded from profit participation. The exact formula for division of profits amongst the creative people has yet to be decided, but it is known that the royalties will be retroactively effective with the October, 1981-dated issues. [Which means I won't be able to give you a personal report on the breakdown, as my last story appeared in September.]

This provides every incentive for creators to attempt to appeal to the fan audience, as most DCs sell at least 100,000 copies through newsstand sales; the fan market would seem to be the gravy, as THE NEW TEEN TITANS has shown. It may actually do something to stem the tide of exodus of talent after several years of service, which has been the pattern created over the past ten years. Its importance as a first step cannot be overstated; it may not be a large amount, but it may, simply because of competition, grow in years to come. The first sign of this has occured: Marvel has announced a similar (though, they claim, more lucrative) plan for their freelance employees.

The title of the book we gave as GEMWORLD last issue is actually going to be called AMETHYST, Princess of the Gemworld, and it's about a young woman's quest to reclaim her lost heritage and her rightful place on the mystic throne of a magical world. One of the authors, Dan Mishkin, describes Amethyst as "a wonderful heroine [with] terrific villains, and Ernie Colon's preliminary work has us very excited. Ernie will be pencilling and inking and the look he's giving to the characters and settings is something rare and special in color comics today." We apologize if our description of the comic came off as perfunctory and dull, Dan.

The writer of SAGA OF THE SWAMP THING is now supposed to be Marv Wolfman, with Tom Yeates remaining as the artist. The back-up strip will be a revival of The Phantom Stranger, as written by Bruce Jones and drawn by Dan Spiegle. It'll be out in February.

Beginning also in the February issue of WONDER WOMAN will be a three-issue sequence in which Wonder Woman teams up with "almost every DC superheroine ever created." It seems that the Adjudicator comes to judge the Earth by placing it under trials at the hands of the Four Horsemen of the Apocolypse, and the super-heroines come to the rescue. (This group will come from the various parallel worlds as well as from all over the globe.) Paul Levitz plotted, with Roy Thomas scripting and Gene Colan and Romeo Tanghal handling the art for those issues, #291-293.

THE BEST OF DC #24 features a new fifteen-page story of the Legion of Super-Heroes by Paul Levitz and Carmine Infantino plus eighteen pages of Legion "Fact Sheets" by George Perez, which includes some never-before-seen uniforms for some members. Reprints include "The Invisible Invader" by Nelson Bridwell and George Tuska; "The Colossal Failure" and "The School For Super-Villains" by Jim Shooter, Curt Swan and Jack Abel; and "The Ghost of Ferro Lad" by Shooter, Swan and George Klein.

DC Comics is currently in the process of returning original artwork which has been stored in the files for many years (some since the late '40s/early '50s). They've lost contact with many of the artists whose work they hold and wish to reach them to return their work. If you've been in contact with or know how to reach any of the following people or their estates, please contact:

Robin Snyder, DC Comics Inc. 75 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, NY 10019.

The artists include:
TONY ABRUZZO
JO ALBISTUR
DOUGLAS ALEKSEY
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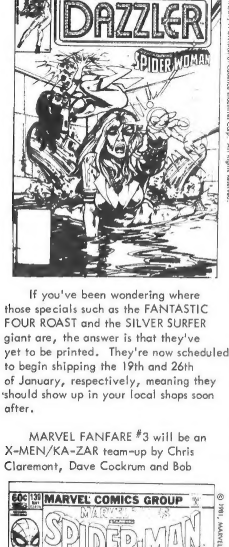
(LARRY?) RIPEE
FRANK ROBBINS
SCHENKMAN
DAVE SIMONS
LEO SOMMERS
ED WALDMAN
ED WHELAN
ALFREDO (BILL) WILLIAMS
KEVIN WOODCOCK

If you've been one of the (evidently) few who've been wondering whatever happened to the "Whatever Happened To...?" feature which used to appear in DC COMICS PRESENTS, you can stop wondering. It has ceased, with any further episodes appearing as lead stories featuring Superman (as with the recent Starman guest appearance).

Also saying bye-bye (again) is media-liason Paul Kupperberg who is again leaving the DC staff to go free-lance. Might it have anything to do with the new royalty set-up Paul?

Marvel News

DC's announcement of writer and artists' royalties has caused Marvel to issue a statement that they would soon institute a similar plan. Jim Shooter has stated, however, that their new plan would be superior to DC's to "give back the edge to Marvel that we've always had." The details will be announced soon.



If you've been wondering where those specials such as the FANTASTIC FOUR ROAST and the SILVER SURFER giant are, the answer is that they've yet to be printed. They're now scheduled to begin shipping the 19th and 26th of January, respectively, meaning they should show up in your local shops soon after.

MARVEL FANFARE #3 will be an X-MEN/KA-ZAR team-up by Chris Claremont, Dave Cockrum and Bob

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McLeod, which will feature a wrap-around cover by Cockrum.

Meanwhile, over in the regular book, Bill Sienkiewicz will be the penciller of UNCANNY X-MEN #159, and he will also pencil the X-MEN ANNUAL, which will appear next summer. #159 features the X-Men in battle with Count Dracula.

Marvel has announced in various places that there will be a companion X-MEN title which will focus on the Xavier School. As of the moment, no details as to artists are known, though Chris Claremont will probably write it.

Rick Leonardi will be the artist on the upcoming SCARLET WITCH/VISION mini-series. No inker has been selected as yet.

If anyone actually pays attention to it, they'll be interested to know that Armando Gil has replaced Jim Owesly as regular artist on CRAZY MAGAZINE's TEEN-HULK strip. Owesly is said to have been too busy to do it any longer.

And Marvel mailed out a press release trumpeting the fact that SPIDER-MAN AND HIS AMAZING FRIENDS has been moved from its original time-period (11:30 AM E.S.T.) to 10:30 AM E.S.T., saying it "has toppled such formidable competitors as Zorro, Tarzan and Thundarr." One might question why, if it was doing so well in its time period, it was moved at all, but that might be construed as cynicism. All I know is that I can't watch it anymore because of the change. Ah well.

Finally, no, you're not imagining things. We really don't have much news or Marvel covers this month. We can't explain why, either, because we don't know.

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Et Al

We erred last issue in listing the ownership of PROFESSIONAL comics outfit Capital Publications Inc. We listed John Davis twice and neglected to list Milton Griepp at all. (My "semi"-professional designation was indicative only of the fact that NEX-US is one of the comic-shop only publications, and hence not a mainstream magazine; it was not meant in a derogatory sense.)

Fantaco is publishing two more in its "Chronicles" series, begun with X-MEN CHRONICLES. #2 will be THE FANTASTIC FOUR CHRONICLES, $1.50, comic-size zine with comic-style cover by John Byrne (front) and George Perez (back), including a 66-character centerspread by Byrne and an article on the FF by him, plus a question-and-answer session with Jack Kirby, a checklist, an article on the animated FF, and more. #3 will be THE DAREDEVIL CHRONICLES, and will have a similar format, with a wraparound cover by Frank Miller and Klaus Janson as well as centerspread, plus interviews with Miller, Janson, Jim Shooter and Denny O'Neil, and artwork by everyone under the sun. The third book in the offing is an all-comics magazine with stories set in the '60s. Entitled GATES OF EDEN, it will be 48 pages on slick paper and magazine size and published quarterly, at $3.50 per issue. Artists include Kim Deitch, Rick Geary, Michael Gilbert, Gary Hallgren, Jeff Jones, Steve Leialoha, Sharon Rudahl, Craig Russell, Trina Robbins, Spain Rodriguez and Fred Hembeck. The CHRONICLES are slated to appear in February; GATES OF EDEN in March.

All the old officers of the Comics Magazine Association of America were re-elected to their old positions, meaning James Galton is still President, Leon Harvey is Vice President and Treasurer, and Joe Orlando is Vice President and Secretary. Chairman of the Board remains John L. Goldwater, with Board members including: James Borth (CBS Publications), James J. Broderick (World Color Press), Daniel Goldstein (Flynt Distributing), Bruce Jones (Curtis Circulation), Stan Lee, Robert Nardozzi (Warner Publisher Services) and Edward Whitbread (Chemical Color Plate).

TCR Mailboat

MARK EVANIER, Los Angeles, CA: Who's Lou Mougin? Whoever he is, he did an excellent job on his article

FOLLOWING THE INTERMENT, DUKE REQUESTS A LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM THE FORCE AND UNDERTAKES A WEIRD JOURNEY -- ACROSS THE EXPANSE OF NEGA-SPACE --
-- TO THE WORLD OF PINK PRIMATES, ON AN ERRAND OF RETRIBUTION.
THERE IS ICE NOW WHERE HIS HEART HAD BEEN -- A CHILLING, IMPLACABLE RAGE THAT CAN ONLY BE ASSUAGED BY AN ACT OF VENGEANCE --
-- AS DEVASTATING AS THAT DEBILITATED ON HIS FRIEND.
-- IF CORPORATIONS -- AND HIS NEIGHBORS! -- CAN SUSPEND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN THE INTEREST OF SHORT-TERM GAIN...
THEN HE CAN SUSPEND RESTRAINT -- IN THE INTEREST OF JUSTICE.
THE JOYRIDE'S OVER PACKER! HERE COMES TROUBLE
AND SO DESTROYER DUCK WADDLES ASHORE ON STATEN ISLAND...
AND TREKS ALL THE WAY TO WINO COUNTRY IN INNER MANHATTAN... SEEKING AN INCONSPICU OUS BASE OF OPERATIONS
BUT A COMPANY THAT KEEPS ITS ETHICS IN THE GUTTER CAN HARDLY AFFORD NOT TO HAVE EYES THERE, TOO... ON A FREELANCE BASIS, OF COURSE.
MR. PACKER? THIS'S CHUMMO. WANNA BUY ANOTHER DUCK...?
WE'RE RECORDING YOU, CHUMMO. SPEAK UP.
RIGHT... A LARGER ONE... SURLY DEMEANOR... DUFFEL BAG... IN COMMANDO ATTIRE
HEADED SOUTH!
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on Tower Comics. This is the kind of thing I like to see in a fanzine; so much better than, "He stole this comic from me because of so-and-so."

I have a few corrections and additions, natch. First of all, a general point. While I was never thrilled (in fact, actively disliked) Manny Stallman's RAVEN stories when they first appeared, I now find them quite charming. Stallman--who also wrote those, by the way--is a former Will Eisner-assistant whose work I find quite original. In a lot of the graphically-static DC love comics of the early sixties, Stallman did a number of the kinds of effects that Jim Steranko later brought to the super-hero books. Anyway, Lou, give those Stallman RAVENs time -- they may grow on you.

Also, another artist whose work I always loved (and I'm pleased to say that I'm now collaborating with on some comics) is Mike Sekowsky. I think he did some excellent work for Tower and deserves to be remembered better for his work there than as one of the artists who were left when "Wood, Kane and Ditko ended up plying their trade for DC." Actually, Sekowsky left Tower long before Ditko did--and even before Wood--and was plying his trade at DC twenty years before either of them.

And one other thing before we get on to who-drew-what: Contrary to what Mougin says, Tower did not have smaller originals than the late-fifties' DC books; at least, the originals from each company that I have are the same size.

"In the Warlord's Power" (THUNDER AGENTS #2) and "The Priceless Counterfeit" (DYNAMO #2), which you credit to Chic Stone and Wally Wood were actually by Dick Ayers and Wally Wood. Steve Skeates, I believe, wrote the first few LIGHTNING stories. "Carnival of Death" (THUNDER AGENTS #6) was pencilled by John Giunta and inked by Carl Hubbell. In #8, "Pyramid of the Warlords" was drawn by Giunta and Giella. Giella co-inked "The Road to Spider H.Q." in #12. In DYNAMO #2, "Between Two Enemies" was by Sekowsky and Chic Stone. In #4, the story "Once Upon a Time" was pencilled by Ditko and inked by Wood.

I'm most impressed with how few errors I found on your list and how you managed to identify some pretty obscure artwork. Considering how rotten most of fandom is at identifying artists (as witness most any dealer's illustrated original art catelogues), it's great that there are still folks around who care enough to learn styles, study artists and preserve this aspect of our funny-book heritage.

Keep your sunny sides up.

[Lou Mougin is a resident of Graham, Texas, a longtime fan reader/writer and a consultant for George Olshevsky's Marvel index series -- as well as being a member of APA-I, which is where we came into contact with him. The series which began with the Tower article was original written in 1977 for COLLECTOR'S DREAM, but when it became obvious it was not going to see print, he offered it to us, updated to the present. His viewpoint of the sixties' comics is remarkably similar to my own (which always helps), and when we realized that we could put to use some index material which we'd planned to do for a long time, we went ahead.

The indexes for the series are done by me, and the art credits are deduced by my own near-sighted peepers. My art-identifying forte is obviously more attuned to DC artists (which helps a lot since I'm working on a DC index at the moment), but I think I can pick out most of the '60s artists. However, we are at the moment thinking seriously of reprinting all of the indexes contained in the series (along with books not discussed) in one volume after we're finished, so if anyone has any corrections to the published indexes, we'd really like to have them.

Lou Mougin himself informed me that I'd missed listing Steve Skeates, the LIGHTNING scripter, among the writers, and also mentiones that Jerry Siegel wrote the NoMAN story in THUNDER AGENTS #13 ("Escape From Destiny"). Gene Reed, who did the original version of the Tower Comics index for APA-I, was missing several of the correct art credits, but did, however, have Dick Ayers credited with those two stories you mention. I, believing it more likely that Stone (who I knew for certain had done Tower work) had begun his Tower-stint as a penciller, changed it. The two do have a few similarities in layout sense, but I should have caught it.

However, Dan Adkins has in-

formed us that his work for Tower appears only in issues #1 and 3 through 13, meaning, of course, that he did not do the cover of #17. He also said that Tim Battersby-Brent was a minor assistant for the Wood studio, and didn't do any inking at all. We missed mentioning, among Wood's assistants (in #197's obituary) Ralph Reese and Tony Coleman. Reese is possibly the penciller of TA #17's cover, and definitely wrote the famous "peanut butter" DYNAMO story ("Bad Day For Leonard Brown"). Dan also mentioned the fact that any crediting of studio work to either Adkins or Wood (as penciller and inker) is only a convenience on our part, as he and Wally would do both on the same stories, inking various parts of pages with no regular system. In fact, Dan even had a hand in the inking of T.A. #10's Al Williamson/Wally Wood cover -- which was signed as such.

Lastly, we erred in running the covers so small (which wasn't helped at all by the extremely spotty print job on most copies), and we hope the size we used on this issue's is more acceptable. MT]

[Continued on page 36]

Comics History

THE BACK-SEAT SUPER-HEROES
By Lou Mougin

PROLOGUE: 1966 and 1967 were financially the hottest years for comics heroes in the Second Heroic Age, due to the "camp" fad initiated by the BATMAN TV show. During this period many companies jumped on the bandwagon with new lines of costumed heroes, all of which were gone when the fad died out in 1968. Among these were Tower, which were covered in TCR #197; Charlton, which we will examine in this and next issue's installments; and Harvey, Mighty and a handful of companies who boasted only one or two super-heroes apiece, which will be covered in the final three parts of the series. None of these minor-league creations ever matched the popularity of Marvel and DC heroes, despite the popularity shown by quite a few of them; hence Jim Steranko's label "The Back-Seat Super-Heroes."

II. "ACTION HEROES? WE'VE GOT 'EM!"

The year was 1966; the Marvel Age of Comics was barely three years old.

Though a few waves of change were being felt, super-heroes in most comics companies were written much

as they had been for nearly thirty years. Superman, Green Lantern and their respective colleagues were the ultimate plastic fantasies. Outside of worrying about one's own secret identity being exposed, and punching the time clock every month to fight the next pop-up villain (with double-duty in the JLA), nothing much happened to change a costumed good-guy's daily routine.

Gil Kane summed it up best in a 1978 COMICS JOURNAL interview: "They had no personal lives, no personal qualities. The strips didn't deal in people, they only dealt in puzzles."

And why not? The SUPER-HERO was selling the books. The readers (so the prevalent party-line went) didn't need to empathize with the character's inner hang-ups or to drool appreciatively over the writer's fine prose style. All they wanted was the same kind of derring-do that Batman and Robin handed out on the screen twice a week. So, on with the heroes. On with the villains. And on with the action. And Marvel-style character-development be damned!

Not so at Charlton Comics. In a single year, Charlton leapt from the bottom of the barrel to a level of writing quality just below that of Marvel and backed it with competent art. The

THE BLUE BEETLE
ONCE AGAIN the BLUE BEETLE FACES HIS ARCH-NEMESIS... WITH NO ASSISTANCE FROM HIS POWERS! TO ASSIST THEM ARE MORE!

© CHARLTON PUBLISHING

newsstands suddenly made room for a new, colorfully-costumed quintet of super-beings who carved out a handhold on the crowded climb to popularity. And thirteen years later, interest in the Charlton Heroic Era still waxes strong, as THE CHARLTON PORTFOLIO, CHARLTON BULLSEYE, and the first issue of the comic book version of CHARLTON BULLSEYE attest.

The one-page house ad that ran in all five super-hero books summed it up best. Five heroes stood forth from the plain white background: the nuclear-powered Captain Atom...the brand-new, third-generation Blue Beetle... Judomaster, martial-arts expert and World War II freedom fighter...the pacifistic, semi-mystical Thunderbolt... and a costumed diplomat who turned the weapons of war back on war's creators, as the Peacemaker.

The headline blurb proclaimed: "ACTION HEROES? WE'VE GOT 'EM!!!" And near the bottom: "5 OF 'EM TO BE EXACT...AND THEY'RE NOT HALF BAD!"

The last line was more understatement than hyperbole. Charlton was out to give the reader his money's worth, and then some; they gave a damn about quality. And it showed!

Granted, the production was sometimes shoddy, and the lettering was machine-typed. The covers weren't quite as flashy as the competition, and the company lacked self-hype, almost to the point of self-effacement. Nevertheless, these feisty little newcomers to the heroic hang-out always did their utmost to give the readers an original, entertaining story. And more often than not, they hit the mark. For probably the first time since 1946, no comics connoisseur would put you down for buying a Charlton comic.

It was not always so, as a Nemedian chronicler might say...

1. Prehistoric Charlton

Charlton Comics had been in existence as a second- (or third-) string comics company for some twenty years prior to the Action-Hero era. The first book published under the Charlton name (the company had begun two years prior to that as Frank Comunale/Levy), MARVELS OF SCIENCE, had seen the light of day in 1946. Plagued by the lowest pay rate in the industry (a condition which continued right up to their termination of buying original work in 1977), the quality of art and writing never rose above a general mediocrity. At times, it was downright HORRIBLE.

Even worse, the company was based in Derby, Connecticut, several hundred miles away from the New York-based stable of comics letterers (at least according to the editors), and used the excuse to set all the word balloons and captions in their comics by the mid-'60s in hideous mechanical type. (The original typeface was actually hand-lettered, but in setting it in evenly-spaced, never-changing rows of type they sabotaged the feeling of the human hand being involved. This was later replaced with a more standard, if no less annoying, mechanical typeface.) The books were primitive, generally ugly, and were to DC and the other majors what CURUCU, BEAST OF THE AMAZON was to 2001.

With these built-in handicaps, Charlton struggled along lamely for two decades as the Brand-X of comics. They existed in the same limbo as Atlas during this time, doing war, romance, science fiction, hot rod, Dennis the Menace-copies, adaptations of Japanese monster film characters, and the Atomic funny-animal group. This last category (sometimes assumed to be a simple rip-off of the Mighty Mouse character) actually derived from the purchase from Fawcett of the FUNNY ANIMALS title, which featured the former Marvel Bunny, Hoppy. As Charlton could not use the "Marvel" appellation, they transferred their prefix from their Mighty Mouse-inspired Atomic Mouse to a line of other super-animals: Atomic Bunny, Atomic Rabbit, Atom the Cat, et al. Although the characters (and their chief artist, Vincent Fago) have received some good comments of late, they were hardly immortals.

Some bright spots did exist for Charlton in these days, usually in the form of the Western books. Most of the titles which dominated the line in the mid-'50s, such as SIX-GUN HEROES and titles starring movie cowboys Lash LaRue, Monte Hale, Gabby Hayes and Rocky Lane, had been acquired from Fawcett after that company's demise in 1953. Al Williamson and John Severin provided some excellent work in the sagebrush shoot-out department before they moved on to greener fields. In the main, however, the books were dominated by a flat, uninspired artstyle and some truly boring writing in the main.

There were a few super-hero titles tried during this period. Charlton had acquired the rights to the Golden Age Fox character Blue Beetle, and promptly shunted him into a book formerly titled THE THING with issue #18. After a bunch of Fox reprints and a few new adventures, the Beetle's career was squashed in favor of a new title and character, MR. MUSCLES, a costumed strong man, as of #22. The Blue Beetle's '50s career included appearances in two issues of SPACE ADVENTURES and in at least one issue of NATURE BOY, but for all intents and purposes, Dan Garrett's chain-mail was hung up for good in 1955. The aforementioned Nature Boy's claim to fame was having been created by Jerry Siegel and John Buscema; his thing was using the powers of earth, air, fire and water to beat up on crooks. (Both he and Mr. Muscles had female counterparts: Nature Girl and Miss Muscles.) The series eroded into oblivion after the third issue. Other than that, Charlton's only other super-heroic forays featured magicians ZAZA THE MYSTIC (who was featured in two issues of her own title), and Ibis the Invincible from Fawcett, who made as many appearances (in DANGER AND ADVENTURE) as there were stories left over from Fawcett's unpublished inventory. But then, the mid-fifties weren't encouraging new super-heroes to be done by ANY company.

The first precursor to Charlton's heroic age came about in late '59 when their first important super-hero was unleashed. He was showcased in the top third of the cover of SPACE ADVENTURES #33, sharing space with a teaser panel from a minor science-fiction story and a promo for a TWA/Disneyland contest. The art on that one panel was the work of a then-obscure, minor-league comics artist named Steve Ditko. The scene depicted a powerful, orange-and-gold-clad figure rocketing from Earth into deep space, his out-thrust fist surrounded with a symbolic atom. The caption read: "In this issue: Introducing... CAPTAIN ATOM!"

Anticipating his descendants Dr. Solar, Nukla and Firestorm, the good Captain was the symbolic Cold War-Hero of America. He epitomized the atomic might that put us one step ahead of the unspeakable Commies (at least, the editors HOPED he did). Atom's strip combined science-fiction themes with simplistic red-baiter theology not QUITE as unrestrained as FIGHTING AMERICAN, but certainly more committed than the apolitical DC heroes. He began a nine issue initial run with a nine-page origin story written by Steve Ditko and written by Charlton's then-editor, Pat Masulli. It was titled -- what else? -- "Introducing Captain Atom."

The nuclear ace was the first in a long line of sixties heroes to gain super-powers from an atomic foul-up. In the

[Continued on page 11]

Charlton Comics Index

The Charlton Comics Group was published by Ed Levy, Burton Levey and John Santangelo, and edited by Patrick Masulli (from the late '50s through July 1966) and Dick Giordano (August 1966 through the Spring of 1968). There are many titles published by Charlton which would ordinarily be included in this index which, because of space, have not. These include the various masked western characters (MASKED RAIDER, GUNMASTER), mid-'50s super-heroes (BLUE BEETLE, NATURE BOY, ZAZA THE MYSTIC, MR. MUSCLES), and science-fiction and mystery titles with no continuing characters. Also left out are other western and military titles.

Charlton's chief writer was Joe Gill and he scripted nearly every non-credited story herein. Since credits were not given regularly until Dick Giordano took over as editor, we are not assigning any of the stories to him, but chances are good he did them. His easily-recognizable style is characterized by his usage of the past tense in captions. All other known writers are credited.

Since the scope of the article this index accompanies only encompasses the mid-sixties era, all post-1968 titles including HERCULES, E-MAN, CHARLTON BULLSEYE and the 1979 version of SPACE ADVENTURES have been omitted.

Thanks to Don Rosa for information on the early SPACE ADVENTURES issues not shown in the cover gallery. Part two will appear next month.

SPACE ADVENTURES Starring
Captain Atom

Volume 3

33, March 1960 Cover: Steve Ditko
"The Galactic Scourge" (7)
Art: Bill Molno?
**Captain Atom "Captain Atom" (9)
Story: Pat Masulli Art: Steve Ditko
"The Captive World" (7)
Art: Charles Nicholas/Vince Alascia
FILLER: text (2)

34, June 1960 Cover: Steve Ditko
**Captain Atom "The Second Man In Space" (7)
Art: Steve Ditko
"Derelict of Doom" (8)
Art: Rocke Mastroserio/?
"The Insatiable Monster Planet" (8)
Art: Charles Nicholas/Sal Trapani
FILLER: text (2)

35, August 1960 Cover: Steve Ditko
**"Spies From Another World" (6)
Art: Steve Ditko
"The Enigma of Pluto" (7)
Art: Bill Molno
"The Unexpected Visitor" (5)
Art: Charles Nicholas/Rocke Mastroserio
**Captain Atom "The Little Wanderer" (5)
Art: Steve Ditko
FILLER: text (2)

36, October 1960 Cover: Steve Ditko
**Captain Atom "The Wreck of X-44" (5)
Art: Steve Ditko
"The Galactic Souvenir" (7)
Art: Rocke Mastroserio
"The Omnipotent Robot" (6)
Art: Bill Molno
**Captain Atom "Captain Atom on Planet X" (5)
Art: Steve Ditko
FILLER: text (2)

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37, December 1960 Cover: Steve Ditko
Captain Atom "The Space Prowlers" (5)
Art: Steve Ditko
"Flight 101 To Nowhere" (5)
Art: Bill Molno
"The Super-Men From Space" (5)
Art: Rocke Mastroserio
"Enemy Overhead" (5)
Art: Bill Molno
**Captain Atom "A Victory For Venus" (5)
Art: Steve Ditko
FILLER: text (2)

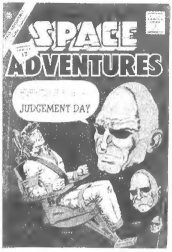
38, February 1961 Cover: Steve Ditko
Captain Atom "One Second of War" (5)
Art: Steve Ditko
Captain Atom "Backfire" (5)
Art: Steve Ditko
"The Common Denominator" (8)
Art: Charles Nicholas/Sal Trapani
Captain Atom "The Force Beyond" (5)
Art: Steve Ditko
FILLER: text (2)

39, April 1961 Cover: Steve Ditko
Captain Atom "Test Pilot's Nightmare" (5)
Art: Steve Ditko
"The 3rd Man" (5)
Art: Bill Molno/Sal Trapani
Captain Atom "Peace Envoy" (7)
Art: Rocke Mastroserio
Captain Atom "An Ageless Weapon" (5)
Art: Steve Ditko
FILLER: text (2)

40, June 1961 Cover: Steve Ditko

**Captain Atom "The Crisis" (7)
Art: Steve Ditko
"The Friendly Planet" (6)
Art: Rocke Mastroserio
"The Stolen Hero" (5)
Art: Bill Molno
**Captain Atom "The Boy and the Stars" (5)
Art: Steve Ditko
FILLER: text (2)

42, October 1961 Cover: Steve Ditko
Captain Atom "The Saucer Scare" (5)
Art: Steve Ditko
"They Said He Would Die" (5)
Art: Bill Molno
Captain Atom "The Man In Saturn's Moon" (7)
Art: Rocke Mastroserio
**Captain Atom "The Silver Lady From Venus" (5)
Art: Steve Ditko
FILLER: The Rocket Comes of Age (1) Rocke Mastroserio; text (2)



44, February 1962 Cover: Rocke Mastroserio
"The Underdog" (6)
Art: Rocke Mastroserio
"The Human Element" (5)
Art: Bill Molno
"Magic Skates" (2)
Art: Dick Giordano/Sal Trapani
Mercury Man "Introducing: The Mercury Man" (10)
Art: Rocke Mastroserio
FILLER: text (2)

45, May 1962 Cover: Rocke Mastroserio
Mercury Man "Mercury Man" (10)
Art: Charles Nicholas/Sal Trapani
"Galactic Assassin" (7)
Art: Rocke Mastroserio
"When the Day Comes" (2)
Art: Bill Molno
**"Judgement Day" (6)
Art: Bill Molno
FILLER: text (2)

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BLUE BEETLE

Volume 2
1, June 1964 Cover: Frank McLaughlin
**"The Giant Mummy Who Was Not Dead" (2: "The Birth of Evil"; 3: "The Mummy's Return") (20)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Bill Fraccio/Tony Tallarico
FILLER: Jungle Waters (1) ?; Freaks of Nature (1) ?; Record of the Rocks (1) Frank McLaughlin; text (2)

2, September 1964 Cover: Bill Fraccio/Frank McLaughlin
**"Hot Water in the Arctic" (2: "Prisoners of Time";

3: "The Master Plan"; 4: "Atomic Death") (20)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Bill Fraccio/Tony Tallarico
FILLER: The Waiting Game (1) Mastroserio/Alascia; The Thief (1) Mastroserio/Alascia; The Lost City (3) Bill Montes/Vince Alascia; text (2)

3, November 1964 Cover: Dick Giordano
**"Mr. Thunderbolt and the Superstar" (2: "Storm of Fear"; 3: "Flames of Fury") (20)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Bill Fraccio/Tony Tallarico
FILLER: What Killed Them? (1) Bill Molno; The Smartest Apes (1) Bill Molno; No Killer Instinct (3) Bill Molno; letters (2)

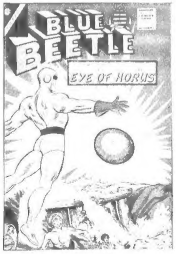
4, January 1965 Cover: Dick Giordano
**"The Praying Mantis Man" (2: "The Chlorophyll Man"; 3: "The Garden of Crawling Death"; 4: "The Mantis and the Beetle") (20)
Art: Bill Fraccio/Tony Tallarico Story: Joe Gill
FILLER: The Silent World (1) Bill Molno?; The Outpost (3) Joe Sinnott/Rocke Mastroserio; Blue Beetle pin-up (1) Pat Masulli; letters (2)

5, March-April 1965 Cover: Bill Fraccio/Dick Giordano
**"Blue Beetle Challenges the Red Knight" (2: "Capture of the White Queen"; 3: "Checkmate") (20)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Bill Fraccio/Tony Tallarico
FILLER: The Gulf Stream (1) Bill Molno; Nightmare (3) Frank McLaughlin; The Temple of Amon-Ra (1) Frank McLaughlin; letters (2) (illo by Alan Weiss)
Volume 3 (Formerly UNUSUAL TALES)
50, July 1965 Cover: Bill Fraccio/Tony Tallarico
**"The Scorpion" (2: "Tomb Beneath the Sea"; 3: "Oil-strike") (20)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Bill Fraccio/Tony Tallarico
FILLER: Treasure Idol of Lago Ri (3) Frank McLaughlin; letters (1)

51, August 1965 Cover: Bill Fraccio/Frank McLaughlin
**"Mentor the Magnificent" (20)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Bill Fraccio/Tony Tallarico
FILLER: Slight Error (3) Rocke Mastroserio; letters (1)

52, October 1965 Cover: Bill Fraccio/Tony Tallarico
**Magno, the Man Who Shakes the World" (2: "Crater of Fire"; 3: "On the Trail of the Mole") (20)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Bill Fraccio/Tony Tallarico
FILLER: The Sacred Monkey of Egypt (1) Bill Molno; The Race (1) Mastroserio; The Insect World (1) Mastroserio; letters (1) (a Tony Isabella letter)

53, December 1965 Cover: Bill Fraccio/Tony Tallarico
**"The People Thieves" (2: "Baiting the Trap"; 3: "The Cave of the Living Dead") (20)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Bill Fraccio/Tony Tallarico
FILLER: The Pyramids of Giza (3) Oscar Novelle; text (1)



54, February-March 1966 Cover: Bill Fraccio/Tony Tallarico
**"The Eye of Horus" (2: "Slaves of the Ancient Eye"; 3: "Menace of the Mind-World") (20)
Story: Roy Thomas Art: Bill Fraccio/Tony Tallarico
FILLER: The Gladiator's War (3) Fraccio/Tallarico; text (1)

THE FIGHTIN' 5
Volume 2 (formerly SPACE WAR)
28, July 1964 Cover: Dick Giordano
**Introducing the Fightin' 5, America's Super Squad" (1: "Frenchy is Found"; 2: "The Private Eye"; 3: "Granite Gallero Joins"; 4: "Hank Hennessey... Special Forces, U.S. Army"; 5: "The Retiring Wrestler"; 6: "The Assignment...") (20)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Bill Montes/Ernie Bache
FILLER: Jungle Death (2) Bill Molno; The Story of the Medal (3) ?; text (2)

29, October 1964 Cover: Dick Giordano
**"The Aztec Destroyers" (2: "The Evil Teacher"; 3: "Allies of Hate"; 4: "The Eyes of Death") (20)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Bill Montes/Ernie Bache
FILLER: The Space Warriors (1) Bill Molno; They Made A Man (3) Bill Molno; "American Pioneer" (1) Dick Giordano (reprint); text (2)

30, December 1964 Cover: Dick Giordano
**"The Ransom of 'Big-D'" (2: "The 'Big-D' Battleground"; 3: "Stolen Empire") (20)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Bill Montes/Ernie Bache
FILLER: The Decadent Democracy (1), The Instant Army (1) and The Phantom of the Sahara (3) Bill Molno; text (2)

31, February 1965 Cover: Dick Giordano
**"The Many Masks of Doom" (2: "The First Encounter"; 3: "A Friendly Face"; 4: "The Last Role") (20)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Bill Montes/Ernie Bache
FILLER: The Meuse-Argonne Battle (1) Sam Glanzman; The Loners (1) and O.S.S. (1) Bill Molno; text (2)

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32, May 1965 Cover: Dick Giordano
**"Image of Glory" (2: "Forbes' Secret Fort"; 3: "The Fate of the World") (20)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Bill Montes/Ernie Bache
FILLER: One More Mission (3) Bill Molno; Fightin' Facts (2) Rocke Mastroserio; text (1)

33, July 1965 Cover: Rocke Mastroserio
**"Cult of the Black Dragon" (2: "The Jungle King"; 3: "The Flames of the Dragon") (20)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Bill Montes/Ernie Bache
FILLER: Peace Corps Patsy (3) Charles Nicholas/ Bill Molno; text (1)

[Continued from page 7]
first panel proper of page one (there was no splash page as such, just six panels and a long strip of copy in the middle), we zoom in on Captain Adam, USAF, making manual adjustments within the warhead of an Atlas missile at about three minutes to ignition. Do NOT ask yourself what this officer was doing there with so little time to blast-off, without even having the countdown stopped. Do NOT pause to consider why no one seemed to know an Air Force captain was in the missile. Rather, ask yourself, "Why didn't Bruce Banner send IGOR to rescue Rick Jones and stop the countdown HIMSELF?"

Unluckily, Captain Adam (if he ever had a first name, we never knew it) drops a screwdriver and gets his hand stuck trying to retrieve it. The panel moved to a closeup of Adam's eye, sweat beading his flesh. "It takes a full minute to squirm out of here! It looks as though I'm going for a long, fast ride!"

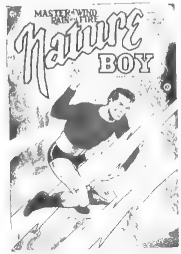
The rest of the origin sequence follows at a fast and predictable clip: Adam's sidekick, Sgt. Gunner Goslin, bursts into the control room with the news just as the final seconds tick off. Base commander General Eining reacts with a "Sto-- oh no! It's too late!" And a finger jabs the control button!! Trapped inside the nose cone of the missile, Captain Adam is subjected to a 20,000 mph take-off, and countless Gs of pressure. Dehydration and oxygen-loss soon follow. Then, 300 miles above the earth, the warhead explodes.

The following panel depicted a human silhouette encircled by electronic rings. "At the instant of fission, Captain Adam was not flesh, bone and blood at all! The dessicated molecular skeleton was intact but a change, never known to man, had taken place!" (Unlike most companies' stories, Charlton's narration was usually told in past tense.) Thanks to the intervention of that Force which watches over potential super-heroes, Adam is atomically reassembled and charged with the power of exploding U-235. He subsequently returns to Earth...under his own power!

Adam's newfound abilities approximated that of a nuclear-powered Human Torch, with near-invulnerability, invisibility, intangibility, super-strength and speed thrown in for good measure. After receiving a protective metallic uniform, the cosmic captain gets his first directive from President Kennedy himself: "You, more than any other weapon, will serve as a deterrant of war! They must not learn about you!... Captain Adam will be your name in the military files -- but your code name will be Captain Atom!"

The newly-christened atomic ace snaps off a salute while standing before an American flag. Charlton's first cold-warrior was born.

Atom's baptism of fire came up one panel later after two seedy saboteurs tampered with the guidance system of an ICBM: "The missile will land on our own huge industrial complex, it will wipe it out! When the missile destroys our city, it will furnish the excuse he wants to begin a total war!" Why, those dirty Commies! Naturally, the Captain demolishes the missile with a single punch; he then receives his congratulations from the president before soaring off into the sunset, the stars and stripes waving gently in the background.



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Captain Atom did his thing in several stories per issue of SPACE ADVENTURES. Ditko handled most of his stories quite competently, sharing time with other artists on the feature. In the space of nine issues Atom battled Communists, rescued errant space pilots (even the first Commie in space!) and tackled outer-space menaces by the carload. This last division included a bevy of beautiful women from Venus who twice attempted to thwart U.S. space probes. He only stopped THEM once. In the second encounter, Atom chauffered the silver-skinned Tokyo Rose behind the Iron Curtain and advised her to sabotage to her heart's content. Sort of makes you wonder where he was during the Cuban crisis...

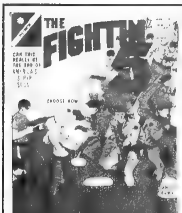
The writing style (probably by Charlton warhorse Joe Gill) was so stiff that scripts were probably written on starched paper ("You return me to my own planet, amazing Earth creature!" "No, madame! That would be impossible right now!"). But Ditko's action-packed art made it one of the more interesting features of the early '60s minor-league companies. Still, in 1961, no one knew Steve Ditko from (ahem) Adam; not until Spider-Man took off two years later would he gain any notoriety. Ditko soon began working exclusively for Marvel, and Captain Atom was dropped. Or was he?

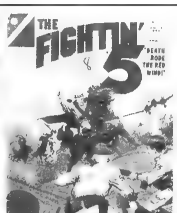
Skipping over three years (the only new character during which was the near-non-entity, Mercury Man, who appeared in SPACE ADVENTURES #44 and 45), we focus on 1964. The super-hero market was growing like a rabbit farm. Marvel and DC were starting to square off for the battle of the cash register, and the Second Heroic Age was firmly established. Editor Pat Masulli decided to give the action-adventure market another try, and began the "pre-trend" super-hero titles of Charlton. The new efforts consisted of three super-titles and three action-adventure strips (as well as giving one costumed western character his own book). The action books, alas, put the super-heroes to shame.

First, the super-heroes. A new version of the BLUE BEETLE disgraced the halls of comicdom for ten issues. Like his predecessor, the 1965 Beetle was named Dan Garrett. Unlike him, the new Garrett was an archaeologist who gained ill-defined super-powers from a blue scarab found in an ancient Engyptian tomb. The origin story was titled "The Giant Mummy Who Was Not Dead!" Joe Gill was the writer and Bill Fraccio and Tony Tallarico were described as the artists. The stories were as rank as any to be found in super-hero history. The less said the better.

Then there was the SON OF VULCAN, alias Johnny Mann. (No, he did not preside over a patriotic singing group.) This Thor-style feature starred a lamed newspaper-reporter with the power of the gods. He had shown the bad judgement to criticize the way the Olympians ran the world whilst standing in Jupiter's ruined temple. As a result, Vulcan adopted him as a son, gave him super-powers and let HIM have a crack at the job. Again, Gill, Fraccio and Tallarico handled the book; again it was terrible.

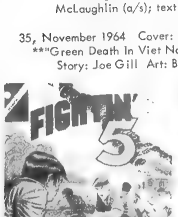
One thing does make SON OF VULCAN a sort of a milestone: In 1965 Charlton ran a writing contest for comics fans, with the lucky amateur winner to have his story illustrated by Tallarico. The victorious scripter was one Roy Thomas, and his tale was published in the last issue of SOV. From such little acorns do mighty Conans grow. And if you have a chance to grab this little





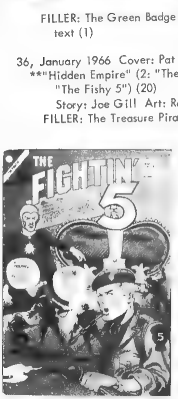
34, September 1964 Cover: Bill Montes/Rocke Mastroserio
**"Death Rode the Red Wind" (2: "Tools of Treason"; 3: "The Red Wind Blows") (20)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Bill Montes/Ernie Bache
FILLER: Sarge Steel "The Sport of Judo" (3) Frank McLaughlin (a/s); text (1)

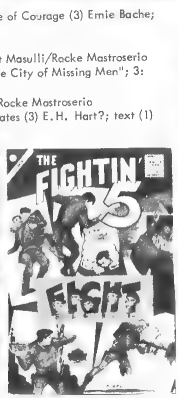
35, November 1964 Cover: Bill Montes/Rocke Mastroserio
**"Green Death In Viet Nam" (2: "A Legend Dies") (20)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Bill Montes/Ernie Bache



FILLER: The Green Badge of Courage (3) Ernie Bache; text (1)

36, January 1966 Cover: Pat Masulli/Rocke Mastroserio
**"Hidden Empire" (2: "The City of Missing Men"; 3: "The Fishy 5") (20)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Rocke Mastroserio
FILLER: The Treasure Pirates (3) E.H. Hart?; text (1)





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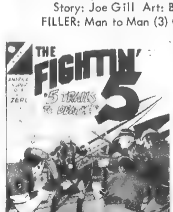
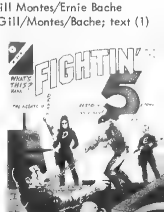
37, April-May 1966 Cover: Bill Montes/Ernie Bache
**"Reign of Evil" (2: "Decreed to Die"; 3: "While a City Sleeps") (20)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Bill Montes/Ernie Bache
FILLER: Sarge Steel "Sport of Judo" (3) Frank McLaughlin (a/s); text (1)

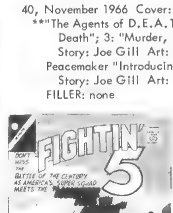
38, July 1966 Cover: Rocke Mastroserio
**"The Plans of S.A.T.A.N." (2: "Planned Disaster"; 3: "City in Flames") (20)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Bill Montes/Ernie Bache
FILLER: Man to Man (3) Gill/Montes/Bache; text (1)





39, September 1966 Cover: Rocke Mastroserio
**"5 Trails to Death" (20)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Bill Montes/Ernie Bache
FILLER: Experiment 74 (3) Gill/Montes/Bache; text (1)

40, November 1966 Cover: Bill Montes/R. Mastroserio
**"The Agents of D.E.A.T.H." (2: "Candidate For Death"; 3: "Murder, My Friend") (18)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Bill Montes/Ernie Bache
Peacemaker "Introducing: The Peacemaker" (8)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Pat Boyette
FILLER: none



41, January 1967 Cover: Rocke Mastroserio
**"Monster From the Abyss" (2: "Aquilla's Doom") (15)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Bill Montes/Ernie Bache
Peacemaker "The War Peddler" (10)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Pat Boyette
FILLER: text (1)

SARGE STEEL

Volume 1
1, December 1964 Cover: Dick Giordano
**File #101 "The Case of the Pearls of Death" (1: "Consignment Terror"; 2: "Nightmare in Saigon";

item, don't pass it up; read it beside his adaptation of "Red Nails" and you'll laugh your socks off for an entire evening! (See also BLUE BEETLE #54.)

The last of the super-heroic triad will be dealt with later. The three non-costumed attractions were the best of the lot, by far. SARGE STEEL, rendered best by Dick Giordano, featured a Mannix-like detective whose magled left hand had been replaced by a steel prosthetic device. His private-eye/espionage thrillers, told in the first person à la Sam Spade, were handled in a fast-paced, tough, action-packed manner that made this one of the best detective strips of the decade (as well as one of the only detective strips of the decade). (Incidentally, Sargent was his first name; his actual rank during his war days was Captain. Don't ask me why -- I just write here!)

THE FIGHTIN' 5, currently being reprinted by Charlton, were a Blackhawk-style group of specialists, designated "America's Super Squad." Their adventures ranged over the entire world, pitting the quintet against foreign powers, enemy spy agencies, costumed villains, and a reborn Aztec empire or two. The book was scripted by Joe Gill and drawn by Bill Montes and Ernie Bache, and was quite competently done, if a bit stiff in the prose department.

And JUNGLE TALES OF TARZAN, an unauthorized adaptation of Burroughs stories, came out during the brief period in which copyright hassles effectively put the Ape Man in the public domain. This series featured some truly effective versions of the pre-Jane Tarzan tales from the collection of the same title, but it was quickly scuttled due to legal problems. (It did have one important effect: Gold Key altered their approach to the stories in the authorized TARZAN title to the same kind of adaptations from the rather repetitious format created for the M-G-M movies.)

Finally, there was the third super-hero title. This offering was featured only in reprints, as the science-fiction title STRANGE SUSPENSE STORIES became, with its seventy-fifth issue, "Strange Suspense Stories Presents CAPTAIN ATOM!"

The cover blurb advised, "You asked for it! Here it is...a COLLECTOR'S SPECIAL!" Regardless of whether we had asked for it or not, the book reprinted the origin story plus two other tales from SPACE ADVENTURES. And this time the Captain had something extra going for him. Steve Ditko? The guy who draws Spider-Man and Dr. Strange? All RIGHT!

The first issue sold well enough to warrant two more books of reprints, all featuring Ditko's unmistakable style. The three ATOM try-outs were to have a profound effect on the history of comics, for Steve Ditko agreed to pencil NEW stories of Captain Atom for the fourth book, winning him over from Marvel. This development, more than anything else, made the Charlton super-hero revolution of '66-'67 possible; the Ditko titles led the way.

Ditko fans crossed over from Marvel to add CAPTAIN ATOM to their buying lists. The success of the feature induced Masulli to add more heroes to the line: first Thunderbolt, then Judomaster, then the Peacemaker and the new Blue Beetle. The moribund original Beetle and Son of Vulcan were dropped; Sarge Steel and the Fightin' Five found homes in the backs of the super-hero books. Ditko soon left Marvel completely and found a new home at Charlton, with free-lancing chores at Warren and Tower presumably making up the difference in page rates at the smaller company. Soon after the initial change, the BATMAN show premiered and pushed super-hero promotion to the fore at all companies, Charlton included.

Staff-wise, winds of change were also being felt. Denny O'Neil, Jim Aparo, Steve Skeates, Dave Kaler, Pete Morisi, Pat Boyette and Frank McLaughlin made their debuts in the Charlton bullpen, producing books of a professional-look not seen since the Williamson-Severin westerns. It was almost a reprise of the Marvel Revolution. All they needed was a Stan Lee surrogate, a figurehead.

This need was filled in early 1966, when Pat Masulli turned over editorial duties to Sarge Steel-artist Dick Giordano. The newcomer proved more than competent; he was revolutionary. Overnight, secondary back-feature hero strips and letters pages were added to the books. A showcase magazine, CHARLTON PREMIERE was added to the line. Two new horror books featured some of the best-written shockers since the early fifties; similar forays were made into the science-fiction (STRANGE SUSPENSE STORIES, SPACE ADVENTURES) and mythological hero (HERCULES) fields. Covers got flashier. The trademark and logos became more streamlined. Content was improved many times over. Some fans, indeed, opined that a new EC was in the making.

Giordano, never a fan of those heroes with world-shaking abilities, ordered up costumed crusaders without super-powers. Instead, his headliners possessed extraordinary abilities and personality trademarks so compelling that the reader forgot the power loss. Hence the label "Action-Heroes."

Five of 'em to be exact. And they weren't half bad...

2. The two phases of Captain Atom

First and foremost of the Charlton quintet was CAPTAIN ATOM, the most solid super-hero title in the stable.

The series went through two distinct creative phases, with Giordano's editorship the dividing line. In two years' time, artist Steve Ditko and writers Joe Gill and Dave Kaler guided the nuclear knight through some of Charlton's most action-packed, tightly-plotted adventures. During that time, Cap changed uniforms once, underwent an abrupt loss of super-powers and gained a female sidekick. It was CONVENTIONALITY that made Captain Atom work; he covered the same turf as most super-heroes, but he did it with style.

Phase One began with #78, retitled CAPTAIN ATOM from the host book STRANGE SUSPENSE STORIES. (Later, a second series of SSS was initiated in the by-then patented Charlton method of multi-title numbering sequences.) On the cover, a grinning Cap Atom blitzed a trio of blue-skinned aliens while awed Air Force personnel looked on; one of the villains screeched, "STOP HIM AND THE EARTH IS OURS!" And if you expected the prose to get

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any better inside, think again.

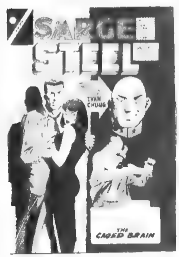
The only thing to distinguish the story within from the SPACE ADVENTURES shorties was the page length. Captain Atom's first job in his new career was to foil a host of sapphire-skinned sneakies from the Planet Blue (honest!!). Said aliens were intent on sabotaging space missions and capturing scientists and astronauts. In their spare time they had built a missile with which they intended to destroy Earth. After a few pages one began to wonder if Captain Video weren't hiding backstage. (Well, at least it wasn't the COMMIES again!) Captain Atom deflects the deadly missile, rescues the aliens' captives and sends his foes packing back to Planet Blue. "They won't bother Earth again!" declared the Captain, in best Rocky Jones fashion.

Scripting improvements came quickly with the next issue. The Cold War/space-opera stigmata were eliminated and Captain Atom came to grips with his first-ever super-villain, the colorful Dr. Spectro. A former scientist,

3: "Destination Death") (20)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Dick Giordano
FILLER: The O.S.S. In World War II (3) Fraccio/Tallarico; The Road to Freedom (1) Sam Glanzman; text (2)

2, February 1965 Cover: Dick Giordano
**File #102 "Case of the Man Who Blackmailed the World" (2: "The Millionaire Trap"; 3: "The Atomic Challenge") (20)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Dick Giordano
FILLER: The Guardians (3) Fraccio/Tallarico; It Takes a Man (2) Fraccio/Tallarico; text (2)

3, April-May 1965 Cover: Dick Giordano
**File #103 "Case of the Heritage of Hate" (2: "The Smiling Skull"; 3: "The Silver Luger") (20)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Dick Giordano



FILLER: Sarge Steel "Sport of Judo" (3) Frank McLaughlin; Doomsday (1) Bill Molno; text (2)

4, July 1965 Cover: Dick Giordano
**File #104 "Case of the Kiss of the Cat" (2: "The Strolling Statue"; 3: "Death on Cat Cay") (20)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Dick Giordano
FILLER: Sarge Steel "Sport of Judo (3) Frank McLaughlin; text (1)

5, September 1965 Cover: Dick Giordano
**File #105 "The Case of the Caged Brain" (2: "Fatal Beauty"; 3: "Pick a Way to Die") (20)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Bill Montes/Ernie Bache
FILLER: Sarge Steel "Sport of Judo" (3) Frank McLaughlin; text (1)

6, November 1965 Cover: Bill Montes/Rocke Mastroserio
**File #106 "Case of the King's Assassin" (2: "Chase West"; 3: $1,000,000 Ransom") (20)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Bill Montes/Ernie Bache
FILLER: Judomaster "What is Karate?" (3) Frank McLaughlin; text (1)

7, January 1966 Cover: Dick Giordano
**File #107 "The Day They Killed Sarge Steel" (2: "Live Bait in the Shark Tank"; 3: "The Murder School") (19
Story: Joe Gill Art: Dick Giordano
FILLER: Sarge Steel "Sport of Judo" (3) Frank McLaughlin; text (1)

8, April 1966 Cover: Pat Masulli/Rocke Mastroserio
**File #108 "Case of the Terrible Talon" (2: "The Faceless Man"; 3: "Trail of a Terrorist") (20)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Bill Montes/Ernie Bache
FILLER: Blue Four Top Secret (3) Joe Gill/Rocke Mastroserio; text (1)

SECRET AGENT
Volume 2 (formerly SARGE STEEL)
9, October 1966 Cover: Dick Giordano
**File #109 "The Warmaker" (2: "The Looters"; 3: "The Warmaker's Stronghold") (20)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Bill Montes/Ernie Bache
FILLER: Sarge Steel "Sport of Judo" (3) and "Sport of Judo" REPRINT from SARGE STEEL #5 (3) Frank McLaughlin; Sarge Steel's Scrapbook of Judo (1) Dick Giordano; text (1)

10, October 1967 Cover: Dick Giordano
**File #113 "The Case of the Third Hand" (2: "Photo Finish"); 3: "Blues For Linda") (18)
Story: Steve Skeates Art: Dick Giordano
Tiffany Sinn "Espionage: Muscle Beach Style" (9)
Story: Dave Kaler Art: Jim Aparo
FILLER: none

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Spectro sported jeweled wristbands whose brilliant color-rays could induce severe emotional change, radiate heat, cold or sickness rays, and absorb power for the villain's own uses. He went bad after an exposure to his own hate-ray. The fight with Atom was a spiffy, eight-page punch-out typical of the Spider-Man fist-fests of that period, and it filled a need: Captain Atom finally had a foe he could go one-on-one with. Spectro was defeated after he absorbed too much power to contain and disintegrated into a living rainbow. "Somehow, I feel he's still up there... somewhere...waiting!" mused Captain Atom.

Fortunately, he was right. Dr. Spectro returned five-fold two issues later; his essence had been converted into five midget forms, each with the power of its precursor. The dwarfed quintet defeated the Captain at every turn. But our hero got the best of it by fouling Spectro's re-merging mechanism, causing the reassembled Master of Moods to suffer a five-way personality split! The script was an as original as any to appear in that period, but this was Gill's last stint as writer. His replacement, Dave Kaler, never saw fit to bring Spectro back for an encore. THIS is disturbing; not only was Spectro a good villain, but it pains the thoughtful reader to consider a man afflicted by five personalities within the same brain for the past fifteen years.

In between the two Spectro issues, Gill and Ditko cranked out another space-opera with the imposing title "Death Knell of the World." Then editor Masulli and author Gill stepped out, and Phase One came to a close. Phase Two, Captain Atom's brightest period, was about to begin.

The cover of the first Giordano/Kaler/Ditko CAPTAIN ATOM hinted at the change taking place. The gold-garbed crusader shared the space with a masked, black-tressed brunette and a white-costumed villain materializing from thin air. The headline blurb queried, "How do you catch a Ghost?" while a teaser-line below identified the mysterious female as "That Darling of Darkness, NIGHTSHADE!" The Captain's arch-enemy and chief side-kick had been introduced in a single stroke.

A saboteur, ostensibly named "The Ghost," had developed a nasty habit of teleporting into guarded locations, stealing government secrets and vanishing. He made his entrance on page three by materializing in his study, a filched batch of secret plans in hand. As he unmasks, the Ghost intones, "Ha! If some of the people I went to school with could see me now! It would really shock them!" In the five-panel case history that followed, the Ghost revealed himself as a true blood brother of Peter Parker. As a high-

school student, Alex Rois is rejected by his peers ("Maybe we should've asked Alec to play?" "Naw, he wouldn't have time! He has to go home and study!") and by heartless coeds ("Looks aren't everything, Jan! His folks don't have the money to buy a car to take you out in!") All high school-age readers of this article are urged to consider this history at length, and beware. The rejected Mr. Rois goes on to build a teleportation device and becomes a white-costumed super-thief. By this time, we were all in his corner.

Accordingly, Captain Atom was assigned to the case by the President himself. "That darling of darkness, Nightshade, will be your partner!" confided a government agent. "She's well-trained and very able, despite the great deal of mystery surrounding her!"

At this, Nightshade makes her first dramatic entrance by tripping through the doorway and stumbling into Captain Atom's shoulder. In this first appearance, she was easily one of the worst-dressed super-femmes of the entire decade, clad in knee-length black dress, a grotesque "Bald-Look" headcap, and a mask that could have been used by Vincent Price in THE FLY. The shadowy she-agent wasn't exactly competition for Sheena, Queen of the Jungle; she looked UGLY. Luckily, Ditko eliminated the hood, trimmed her skirt-length and streamlined her mask for the second appearance, making for a more palatable super-heroine.

Nightshade's origin story was somewhat sketchily revealed in issues #87 and #88. It seemed that her mother was actually a princess from a magical dimension who had come to Earth, and, somehow, married a United States senator. (And they say there are no more secrets in Washington...) On a return trip, the lady was slain by werewolf-like agents of the mysterious Incubus. Her daughter, Eve Eden, swore to someday avenge her death and took the time-honored Batman route. After learning the martial arts and developing her inherent ability to become a living shadow, Eve donned mask and costume to become Nightshade and offered her services to the government.

Actually, Nightshade was a refreshing change from the run of mid-sixties heroines. Most distaff super-beings, at that time, deigned to zap villains with anything less lady-like than hex powers or invisible force fields. Charlton's first-line heroine took the more direct route a la Emma Peel and beat the bejabbers out of hardened thugs with her gloved mitts and a little karate. NO female was doing that in 1966 comics. After Nightshade, practically all super-heroines took up crash martial-arts courses. She soon won a solo series in the back of CAPTAIN ATOM for three issues; Jim Aparo's clean-lined, appealing art made her one of the first well-drawn sixties solo heroines. All in all, Nightshade was the closest to a female super-star that Charlton ever evolved.

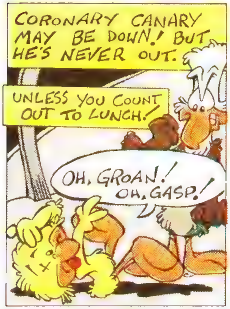
In the eventual battle against the Ghost, Captain Atom and Nightshade are stymied. Atomic-powered knuckles and karate kicks fail to connect with the vanishing form of the Ghost. The fight sequence unveiled Kaler's conception of Captain Atom; he limited Cap's offensive to invisibility, flight and Spider-Man style strength, and was even staggered by one of the Ghost's punches! Editor Giordano had a well-known dislike for super-powered heroes and had evidently instructed his scripter to put on the brakes. Thus, Captain Atom held his temper and kept his atomic fireballs in check.

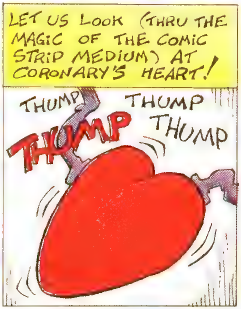
Finally, the Ghost's teleport device fouled up, hurling him into a sub-space dimension. He returned for two more forays with Atom and Nightshade. In the Ghost's encore appearance, issue #89, it was revealed that the dimension he had been cast into was the homeland of an Amazonian race which revered him as the image of a long-lost god. His final battle with Captain Atom had to wait some seven years, until the

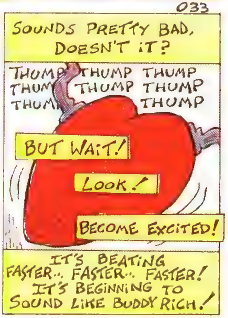
[Continued on page 19]

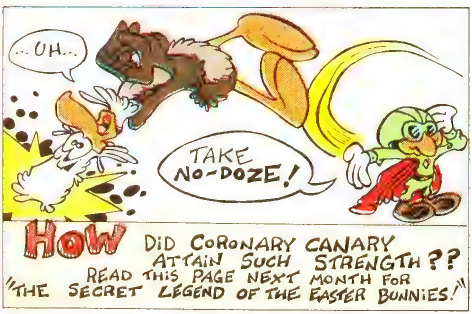
BULLET CROW by CHUCK FIALA

FOWL OF FORTUNE








...UH...
TAKE NO-DOZE!
HOW DID CORONARY CANARY ATTAIN SUCH STRENGTH??
READ THIS PAGE NEXT MONTH FOR "THE SECRET LEGEND OF THE EASTER BUNNIES!"

CAPTAIN KENTUCKY IN HOLLYWOOD!

EPISODE 102: ©1981 Don Rosa

AS C.K. LEAVES THE NBC STUDIOS WHERE HE'S JUST GUESTED ON THE TONIGHT SHOW WITH CARSON---

YOU'RE GOING ON VACATION NEXT WEEK? SURE, I'LL GUEST-HOST FOR YOU! LISTEN- CALL ME...WE'LL HAVE LUNCH!

EY, MISTAH CAPITAN KENTUCK! I WONNA TOKKA' TO YOU! HERE---IN THIS PRIVATE SCREENING ROOM!

WHO...WHO ARE YOU?!

I'M DA' WORLD-FAMOUS PRODUCER, DINO DE LINGUINI, AN' I'M GONNA' PUTTA' YOU INNA DA MO'AM PITCHAHS! DA' WORLD WANTS TO SEE CAPITANA KENTUCK'S ADVENTURES IN LOUISVILLE, ANNA' WE GONNA' PRESERVE IT FOR POSTERIOR! AN, 'EY, WE GONNA' MAKE PLENTY LIRA, TOO! YOU JUSTA' WATCH DIS TEST FOOTAGE AN' TELL DINO WHICH YOU WONNA STAR IN FIRST!

KENTUCK, SWEETHOT, I GOTTA DA OPTION FOR "JAWS III"...I CAN SEE IT NOW: A SNOW SHARK GETS LOOSE INNA DA ARTIFICIAL SNOW AT PAGLI PEAKS, MUTATES TO ENORMOUS SIZE AND TERRORIZES DA SKIERS! WE CANNA' USE DA' TAG LINE: "JUST WHEN YOU THOUGHT IT WAS SAFE TO GET OFF THE SKI-LIFT"!

N[illegible] DA' SEQUEL TO "AIRPORT"...I SAS'EN MOS ...A FOLLOW-UP TO "AIRPORT '79 the CONCORDE" I CANNA SEE IT NOW: "AIRPORT '82--the SKYCAN!"

THESE LCD WATCHES: BELIEVE IT OR NOT, THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO NEED A WATCH TO TELL THEM THE DAY OF THE WEEK & THE MONTH? PLUS, IT HAS TO HAVE AN ALARM THAT PLAYS "the YELLOW ROSE of TEXAS" INSTEAD OF JUST BEEP?

DONTA' LIKE? HOW 'BOUT "J.FRED FROG vs. GODZILLA"? ABSOLUTE BOFFO?

RIBIT!

NO? KENTUCK, I LUV YA! GOT ONE ALL 'BOUT DOSE TITANS OF FINANCE, DA BINGHAM FAMILY AND THEIR NEWSPAPER EMPIRE! WE CALLA' IT "CITIZEN BINGHAM"!...OR GO FOR DA' KIDDIE BIZ AND FILM, "CASH OF THE TITANS"! SOCKO STUFF!

YOU A TUFF CASE, BUT YOU LIKA DIS: A MOVIE BOUT DA' BLACK BIRD INVASION IN UPTOWN DATLL BE SO BIG WE DO A SEQUEL ABOUT DA' STATE GOVAMENT HIRING YOU TO FIGHT DEM OFF! I CANNA' SEE IT NOW: "STARLING WARS" AND "THE COMMONWEALTH STRIKES BACK"!

EY, YOU DIG SCIENCE-FICTION? WE DO ONE WHERE DA' PRESIDENT'S PLANE CRASHES IN AN AREA OF RAMPANT CRIME AN' CRIMINAL HORDES, ANNA' YOU GOTTA' GO IN AND SAVE HIM? WE CALL IT "ESCAPE FROM DOWN-TOWN LOUISVILLE"!

I THOUGHT YOU SAID SCIENCE FICTION!

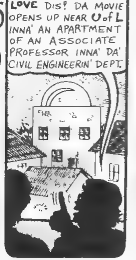
NOOOO! DIS'N IS TO SHOO! A SUPER SPY THRILLER SHOWIN' DAT DA LOUISVILLE SEWER EXPLOSION WAS A K.G.B. PLOT! WE CALLA' IT "FOR YOUR NOSE ONLY"!

YOU A HARD MAN TO PLEASE, BUT DISN'LL KNOCK YOU SOX OFF: A BLOCKBUSTER 'BOUT A BUS-LOAD OF V.I.P.'S DAT GETS LOST AN' YOU GOTTA FIND EM! I CAN SEE IT NOW: "RIDERS OF the LOST TARC"!

NEXT WEEK: YES! CAPTAIN KENTUCKY--the MOVIE!

Captain Kentucky in HOLLYWOOD

YOU MAY BE A WORLD-FAMOUS PRODUCER, MR. DELINQUINI, BUT I DON'T BELIEVE I CARE FOR ANY OF THESE MOVIES YOU PROPOSE TO STAR ME IN!
'EY! I SAVA' DA BIGGIE to LAST! WE GONNA' REMAKE "SUPERMAN" AN "SUPERMAN II" AN' REWRITE 'EM JUSTA fo YOU!
ROLL 'EM!
EPISODE 103
©1981 D.J.R.


I ALREADY GOTTA' ALL DA "SUPERMAN" STARS LINED UP TO RECREATE THEIR ROLES! WATCH DIS TEST FOOTAGE YOU GONNA LOVE DIS! DA MOVIE OPENS UP NEAR U of L INNA' AN APARTMENT OF AN ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR INNA' DA CIVIL ENGINEERIN' DEPT.

YES, MY WIFE, I HAVE DETERMINED THAT, DUE TO A CHEMICAL SPILLAGE, THE CITY SEWER SYSTEM IN THIS AREA IS IN DANGER OF IMMINENT EXPLOSION... BUT NO ONE WILL BELIEVE ME.
OH, MY HUSBAND, WHAT WILL WE DO? AND OUR INFANT SON... HOW WILL WE PROTECT HIM FROM THE AWFUL SMELL AND PLUNGING PROPERTY VALUES?
U of L

I HAVE CONSTRUCTED THIS ABSOLUTELY RIDICULOUS LOOKING CRAFT TO CARRY HIM SAFELY TO A REMOTE CORNER OF THE GALAXY KNOWN AS... "VALLEY STATION"
RESIDENTS OF VALLEY STATION ARE INSTRUCTED TO READ THIS AS "ONOMATOPOEIA" FOR ALL MATTERS THAT

BUT, HUSBAND-- COMING FROM A SNOBBY COLLEGIATE ENVIRONMENT, HE'LL BE SO DIFFERENT FROM THEM? HE WON'T LIKE STREET RODS, CRUSHED VELVET UPHOLSTERY OR SLIM WHITMAN RECORDS?
NONETHELESS, HE MUST BLAST OFF NOW! THE SEWERS ARE ABOUT TO EXPLODE.... AND THE LIL BOOGER JUST SOILED HIMSELF IN THE MIDDLE OF MY BIG SCENE!
SPLAT!

THE BEST REASON TO NOT DROP OUT OF HI-SCHOOL OR TO GO ON TO COLLEGE IS NOT TO GET A BETTER JOB, BUT THAT IT'S TRAGIC TO GO THRU LIFE WITHOUT EXPOSURE TO THE UNIVERSE OF WONDROUS THINGS & IDEAS THERE ARE TO LEARN OF.

WAITAMINIT? THIS IS TOTAL NONSENSE! THE SEWER EXPLOSION WAS LESS THAN ONE YEAR AGO! I'VE BEEN C.K. FOR Two YEARS, NOT TO MENTION I'M 30 YEARS OLD?
DONTA' WORRY? DA' PUBLIC DONTA NOTICE LITTLE DETAILS LIKA' DAT? SO WE DO A REWRITE ONNA' YOU LIFE. SO BIGGA' DEAL! TRUSTA' ME!

WHY, IT'S A BABY! AND WON'T THIS THING LOOK SHARP IN THE FRONT YARD BETWEEN THE PINK FLAMINGO AND THE TRACTOR TIRE PLANTER?!
... RIGHT AFTER I CHANGE HIM! PHEW!

AS YOU GROW UP YOU FINDA YOU CAN PERFORM SUPER-FEATS, LIKA' OUTRUN AN LCN TRAIN! BUT LUCKILY NOBODY NOTICES SINCE DA THINGS ARE SO SELDOM ONNA' THEIR TRACKS, ANYHOW!

BUT (SPUTTER) HEY! DOES DA' PUBLIC HOW DO YOU EVER WONDER HOW EXPLAIN HOW SUPERMAN FLIES OR I GOT THESE HAS HEAT VISION? SUPER POWERS? TRUSTA' ME? ---
NOW WHENA' YOU GROW UP & MOVE TO LOUISVILLE YOU GET A REPORTER JOB ONNA' THE "BARGAIN MART" AND DAT'S WHERE DA' STORY REALLY GETS EXCITIN'!
BUT NOT TILL... NEXT WEEK.

FOOTNOTES FOR CAPTAIN KENTUCKY

EPISODE #102 – Paoli Peaks is a southern-Indiana ski-resort where they use artificial snow. Barry Bingham Sr. and Barry Bingham Jr. are the city's media tycoons, owning the only newspapers, as well as the biggest TV station and a major radio station (WHAS). J-Town is Jeffersontown, a suburban area. There's Skycam and J. Fred Frog again. Several miles of Louisville sewers blew up last winter due to a chemical spill... It was national news! And the city bus system is known as T.A.R.C. (Transit Authority of River City).

EPISODE #103 – Valley Station is a suburban area of the city where, it can be said, you'd find more trailer parks than mansions. "Bargain Mart" is a weekly yard-sale newspaper.

EPISODE #104 – Ken Rowland is the chief Channel 32 anchorman. Frank Metts is a local real-estate mogul who has become a state transportation commissioner under his buddy Gov. Brown and has been accused of occasional "conflicts of interest."

EPISODE #105 – U of L's symbol/mascot is a cardinal, as college sport fans probably know. Valerie Perrine is apparently portraying the mayor's "traveling companion" as she is referred to in the media. Dupont Square is a cow pasture Frank Metts bought and turned into a primo commercial district.

[Continued from page 15]

story which was intended for (and even advertsied as being in) #90 was presented in CHARLTON PORTFOLIO.

And with all this, #82 was only a transitional issue.

The real Phase Two Captain Atom took the stage in a two-parter in issues #83 and 84. Dick Giordano's intent was clear: any hero who could survive nuclear bombings, punch out missiles and fly through interstellar space was just too powerful to duke it out with garden-variety thugs. A drastic reduction in power and a new, flashier image were in the works. The titles told it all: #83's was "Finally Falls the Mighty," followed by #84's "After the Fall, a New Beginning!"

The plot for the two-issue opus could easily have been lifeted from AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #18 and 19. Basically, the premises were: initial confrontation/hero comes under public condemnation/loses power AND battle/undergoes cataclysmic change/everything comes out all right. It was still effective. As the story went, Captain Atom engages in battle with some saboteurs, accidentally endangers some bystanders with possible radiation poisoning, and finds himself branded a menace by the press and the Common Man. (No theme is more common in Ditko stories.) Moreover, Atom must quell a rampant reactor, and his power is reduced substantially as a result. So weakened is he that a squad of enemy agents beats him to his knees and captures him; the Captain barely escapes with his life after being publicly unmasked on TV.

Back at the base, Captain Atom begins a comeback. First, he designs a new protective outfit, the first spray-on super-hero costume. An attendant permeates his skin with a metallic coating invisible under normal conditions. But to no avail. Atom's radiation count remains too high. Despondent, the Captain sighs, "I know it's failed, Gunner! I'll have to go back to wearing my old uniform, or -- give up being Captain Atom!"

As he reaches for his gold metallic suit, a surge of power courses through Atom's body. And, one "What's happening?" later, a super-hero is reborn. The maskless red-blue-yellow-silver uniform of the new Captain Atom is revealed in an impressive one-page transformation scene. Now harmless to normal humans, the atomic avenger streaks off to defeat his foes in a satisfying six-page smash-'em-up. The new Captain Atom was a going concern.

The new Captain's more temperate abilities made him an easier foe to find a match for. Besides the Ghost, his enemies included the heat-and-cold wielding Fiery-Icer; Thirteen, a futuristic secret agent who fought to protect the fate of his time-line; and Punch and Jewelee, a pair of puppeteers who had come across a chest of alien super-gadgetry made to order for villainy. Captain Atom's nemeses were the flashiest in the Charlton stable.

Nonetheless, his series was suspended with issue #89, right in the middle of a two-parter. Ditko's brief sojourn with DC was evidently about to begin, and the Backseat Era was ending with the close of 1967. Captain Atom was shelved for the second time in his career. (His third incarnation was even more short-lived; reprints of the pre-Giordano stories appeared in SPACE ADVENTURES #9-13 in 1979.)

In retrospect, Captain Atom was a success for the Charlton group because he fulfilled a SINE QUA NON for super-hero strips: he was SUPER. Whereas Judomaster, Thunderbolt, the Blue Beetle and Peacemaker made do with

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heightened skills and weaponry, Captain Atom bested them all with his own inherent power. He was a more fulfilling fantasy image. After all, who wants judo skills or total brain control when one can pulverize the opposition with an atomic fireball? Atom could take on mightier villains, enter into adventures of greater scope and conflict, and play around with science-fiction themes. His strip thus gained an added dimension of interest. Atom showed the other Charlton titles what super-heroics were all about.

For those reasons, and for the art of Ditko, Captain Atom has become symbolic of the Charlton Action-Hero Era. He was one of the biggest mini-heroes of the period, and his adventures are among the most fondly remembered by Action-Hero buffs everywhere.

3. The Beetle Is Born

The book that introduced the change in Captain Atom (#83) also unleashed Ditko's second super-hero offering for the company. Down at the bottom fourth

JUNGLE TALES OF TARZAN

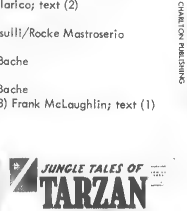
Volume 1

1, December 1964 Cover: Sam Glanzman
Frontis (1) Text: Pat Masulli Art: Sam Glanzman
"The Capture of Tarzan" (11)
Art: Sam Glanzman
"The Fight For the Balu" (10)
Art: Sam Glanzman
FILLER: Tarzan's Way of Life (2) Glanzman; Creatures of the World (3) Bill Fraccio/Tony Tallarico; text (2)

2, February 1965 Cover: Sam Glanzman
Frontis (1) Text: Pat Masulli Art: Sam Glanzman
"The Battle For Teeka" (10)
Art: Sam Glanzman
"Tarzan Rescues the Moon" (10)
Art: Sam Glanzman
FILLER: The Lost Temple of Laas (3) Fraccio/Tallarico; A Family Man (2) Fraccio/Tallarico; text (2)

3, May 1965 Cover: Dick Giordano/Rocke Mastroserio
"The Nightmare" (10)
Art: Sam Glanzman
"The God of Tarzan" (10)
Art: Sam Glanzman
FILLER: The Witch Doctor (2) Fraccio/Tallarico; Ape Canyon (3) Fraccio/Tallarico; text (2)

4, July 1965 Cover: Pat Masulli/Rocke Mastroserio
"The Lion" (10)
Art: Bill Montes/Ernie Bache
"A Jungle Joke" (10)
Art: Bill Montes/Ernie Bache
FILLER: Crocodile Tears (3) Frank McLaughlin; text (1)



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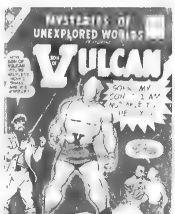
MYSTERIES OF UNEXPLORED WORLDS
Starring Son of Vulcan

Volume 1

46, May 1965 Cover: Dick Giordano
***"A Mighty Champion Is Born" (10)
Story: Patrick Masulli Art: Bill Fraccio/Tony Tallaric
"He Stands Alone" (10)
Story: Pat Masulli Art: Bill Fraccio/Tony Tallarico
FILLER: Watchdogs of the Deep (1) Bill Molno; The Miniatures (1) Rocke Mastroserio; The Roman Gods of Mount Olympus (3) Charles Nicholas/Mastroserio; text (1)

47, July 1965 Cover: Bill Fraccio/Tony Tallarico
***"The Golden Curse" (20)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Bill Fraccio/Tony Tallarico
FILLER: Strange Galaxy (3) Charles Nicholas/Rocke Mastroserio; text (1)



48, September 1965 Cover: Bill Fraccio/Tony Tallarico
***"Fury of the War God" (2: "The New Captain Tusk"; 3: "The Villain") (20)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Bill Fraccio/Tony Tallarico
FILLER: Volcano (3) Rocke Mastroserio; text (1)

SON OF VULCAN

Volume 2 (formerly MYSTERIES OF UNEXPLORED WORLDS)

49, November 1965 Cover: Rocke Mastroserio
***"The Diamond Dancers" (2: "A Living Tomb" (20)
Story: Joe Gill Art: Bill Fraccio/Tony Tallarico
[Note costume redesigned by Dave Cockrum]
FILLER: Enemies of the Deep (3) Frank McLaughlin; text (1)

50, January 1966 Cover: Bill Fraccio/Tony Tallarico
***"The Second Trojan War" (2: "Prisoners of Dr. Kong"; 3: "The Trojan Horse Walks") (20)
Story: Roy Thomas Art: Bill Fraccio/Tony Tallarico
FILLER: The Strangers (3) Ernie Bache; text (1)

of the cover, a guy in a two-toned blue costume swung Daredevil-style between the concrete canyons of the Big City. And the teaser blurb read, "Plus the all-new adventures of the all-new Blue Beetle!"

The story was as brief and uncomplex as a Golden-Age back-up feature in SENSATION COMICS or MARVEL MYSTERY. Quickly and without fanfare, we are introduced to the third hero in comics to bear the name "Blue Beetle." That was all he had in common with his two ancestors; this Beetle had no superpowers to speak of, just two flashing fists and a mysterious gun on his hip, and a grotesque airborne Beetle-Ship, dubbed "The Bug." The contrasts were enough to arouse curiosity. Just who WAS that masked man, anyhow?

Even the villains of the piece were nonplussed. As he swung headlong into a pack of bank robbers, one hood complained, "He ain't the Blue Beetle I once seen!"

"No, I'm not," allowed the hero. "But you fellas will be hurtin' just as

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much when I'm through with you!"

After stunning the Beetle with a concussion grenade, the crooks attempt to unmask the hero. His headgear, alas, proves to be immovable and the metallic cloth resists being pulled apart. (Only the touch of the Beetle's fingertip control could release the chin-lock of his mask. This led to an attempt to rip off the Beetle's cowl every issue; it seemed logical, but one began to wonder why other super-heroes had never run into their share of mask-jerkers as well. "Go for the mask!" was an unwritten law of combat in this strip.)

The Beetle recovers, summons his trusty Bug by remote control and locates the thieves' getaway car. The monstrous machine picks up the vehicle with its front legs and deposits it, none too gently, in front of police headquarters. Bugging off into the sunset, the Blue Beetle muses, "Guess that wraps up the first episode in the life of the new Blue Beetle! Wonder what Dan Garrett would say if he could have seen me today?"

That last question may have been quite profound. In the next issue, the Beetle's alter-ego became suspected of murdering Dan Garrett.

The mythos of the new Beetle began to take shape in CAPTAIN ATOM #84. We were made aware of his secret identity (Ted Kord, scientist), his underground lair, and his girl-friend/assistant/confidante Tracey. Of course, there was the regulation fisticuffs with a masked villain. Refreshingly, the Beetle didn't come on as Captain America; the baddie smashed an oaken stool over his head and our man went DOWN. And finally, Kord's Jauvert was introduced in the person of Lieutenant Fisher, a police detective who hounded Kord in connection with Garrett's untimely disappearance. The story, like the earlier one, was as jam-packed as a can of tomato paste.

The new Blue Beetle strip proved interesting enough for two more outings in Captain Atom. Ditko drew and plotted all of these, which were scripted by Gary Friedrich. After that, the Beetle was graduated to his own magazine. Friedrich left for his initial stint at Marvel, and he was more than replaced by the very competent scripting of one "D.C. Glanzman." (This was an alias for Ditko and co-scripter Sam Glanzman, known these days for his art and scripts for DC's war books.)

The mystery of the Beetle's origin and his connection with the previous Charlton Blue Beetle dangled enticingly for six adventures. Finally, in BLUE BEETLE #2, the true story was revealed. The two-toned crimefighter took Tracey into his confidence (to say nothing of doing the same for the readership) and related one of Charlton's best origin epics.

After aiding his Uncle Jarvis (the mad scientist of the family) in a mysterious series of experiments, young Ted Kord discovered the true nature of his relative's machinations. The end product was to be a series of nearly-invulnerable war-robots intended to raise Jarvis to the position of world dictator. (How would we ever have guessed?) The old man supposedly has met death in a lab fire, but Kord takes his old college chum Dan Garrett hunting for Jarvis's secret lair on Pago Island. Always nice to have a friend around when you're hunting for a horde of killer robots.

As expected, the uncle proves to be alive and kicking and captures the pair with the aid of his mechanical monsters. In his lair, Jarvis gloats in best Vincent Price fashion: "When the time comes, I'll strike swiftly and rise to absolute power...and rule alone! Your efforts are in the robot that holds you, Ted! It will be like dying by your own hand! CRUSH THEM!"

At that, Dan Garrett palms his trusty blue scarab and becomes the 1965 Blue Beetle! (Bet you knew it all the time!) The world's most mundane super-hero frees himself and Ted Kord and takes on the robot task force single-handedly. Not to be defied, Jarvis sends a surge of deadly current through his creations. Killing energy rips through the Beetle's body, demolishing the robots and the laboratory in the bargain, but the feedback destroys the master schemer in his control room with a spectacular energy burst.

Ted Kord crouches beside the dying Beetle in the debris as the super-hero swearing-in ceremony takes place. "Ted, you must keep my secret," gasps the unmasked hero. "Promise me you'll carry on...for the Blue Beetle!" Kord gives his assent. But, just as he reaches for the blue scarab, the ceiling caves in and separates him from Dan Garrett. The Beetle-to-be flees the cave-in and reaches safety, and is soon picked up by a rescue party. Since revealing the

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entire truth is Out of the Question, Ted Kord falls under suspicion of murdering Dan Garrett.

In the meantime, Kord begins establishing his new identity. The ungainly, anti-grav powered "Bug" is built. Then, donning a two-toned blue costume with yellow trim, he assumed his alter ego: "And so, after months of labor, hours of testing and practice with my equipment and a crash physical-training program, my promise to Dan Garrett reached fulfillment! I emerged as the BLUE BEETLE!"

With Ditko's fine artwork and even better scripting than Captain Atom had been blessed with, the third-generation Beetle survived his four-issue try-out, went to five issues in his own book, and made encore appearances in THE CHARLTON PORTFOLIO and CHARLTON BULLSEYE #1. It was as much a triumph as his predecessor had been a tragedy!

The Blue Beetle's only "powers" were two flashing fists and a mysterious-

looking raygun. (The latter proved SO mysterious that one of his better sagas was built around it; more on that later.) Invariably, Ditko matched him against hordes of criminals in duke-swinging action. The Beetle was fit enough to take out five hoods at a crack, but the crooks always seemed to travel in a small regiment and often got the better of him. Whenever this occurred, the inevitable mask-jerk attempt would follow. It was cliché, but it never seemed such.

The Beetle's main trademark was the Bug, whose huge dimensions invited comparison with the USS Enterprise. How he ever constructed an underground lair big enought to PARK the thing, and that with room to spare, was never elaborated. Still, it had its uses. The Beetle's uniform may not have been designed to "strike terror into their hearts," but the sight of such a contraption hovering overhead would scare more hell out of the average crook than Batman could ever hope to!

Ditko controlled the plotting of

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the Blue Beetle throughout the run of the series. The later stories became vehicles for Ditko to express his right-est/libertarian political views in candy-coated form. (The more hard-line propagandizing was saved for features such as the Question and Mister A.) Ditko allowed no space for "shades of grey" in his grim cosmos. His characters chose between stark, clearly-defined blacks and whites, and woe betide the transgressor. Evil-doers were usually shown clinging to the crumbling remnants of a blackened path as they hung above the Bottomless Pit! More than any other comics artist of the sixties, Ditko was an avenging god.

The first issue of the Beetle's book pitted him against a gang of costumed thieves dubbed "the Squids," whose gimmick was climbing walls' with suction cups attached to their costumes. After the origin epic in #2, the Beetle paid his dues in the third book with another patented "public-despises-hero" story. The villains this time were the Madmen, the zaniest gang of thugs ever to see four-color incarnation. Clothed in multi-colored union suits that apparently had been tie-dyed four times running, the bank-robbing baddies were definite prototypes for the Creeper. Half clowns, half acrobats, the Madmen blitzed the Beetle in a two-page free-for-all ("Get him, Madmen! He's trying to stop us from making a living!") and snatched up the hero's Beetle-Gun in the bargain.

At this point, nobody (including the reader) had any idea of what the Blue Beetle's weapon was supposed to do. The clownish crimesters played on public innocence and fear by threatening to blast bystanders with the Beetle-Gun. The locals were scared into instant obeisance. Predictably, the Common Man turns against the Beetle, rather than the Madmen. ("The Blue Beetle should be arrested for carrying a weapon!" "I heard its sound drives men insane!" "Don't disintegrate us! Don't fire!") The story climaxes with a beautifully-choreographed six-page slugfest between the hero and the pied-plunderers. The Beetle retrieves his gun and promptly fires it point-blank at his foes.

A second later, the blinded Madmen flounder in darkness. "WHA!" exclaims the gang's chief (unknowingly foreshadowing a future Ditko fan-oriented magazine title). "It's only a FLASH GUN!" So much for Ditko-styled irony.

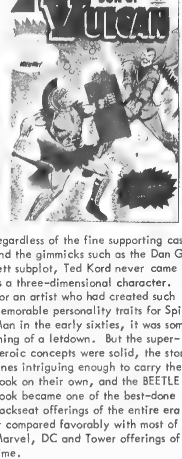
BLUE BEETLE was suspended with the fourth issue, in which Ted Kord was cleared of all suspicions in the Garrett case. The book returned almost a year later for a final bow. In a rare Charlton crossover, the Blue Beetle joined forces with the Question's alter-ego, Vic Sage. The menace this time was "Our Man," a self-styled "destroyer of heroes." The villain's defeatist philosophies led him to destroy all portrayals of triumph and positivism. Ditko laid his black/white viewpoints on with a trowel in this episode. Entire pages were devoted to ideological debate:

"The only good man is one who has faults, like Our Man," opined one character. "Any person without faults would be a disgusting spectacle!"

"That's why you're always complaining about stupid sales clerks, idiotic drivers and dumb politicians?" replied his listener. "You're knocking your GOOD MAN'S VIRTUES!" (Well, whatever else Ditko may have been, subtle he wasn't.)

After the heroic era, several Charlton books ran house ads for a sixth issue of BLUE BEETLE. This never materialized, but the story intended for that issue finally saw print in 1975 in THE CHARLTON PORTFOLIO. The blue-hued battler made his final appearance battling the nearly-invisible Spectre. The response generated by the PORTFOLIO proved one thing: fans still remembered the Charlton heroes seven years after the Backseat Era. Specifically, they remembered the Beetle. (As did Dan Reed, fan-artist who inspired Charlton's fan-produced title CHARLTON BULLSEYE; the first issue headlined the Beetle in a team-up with the Question.)

Ditko unleashed his most action-packed Charlton art in his ten Blue Beetle mini-epics. It was his best collection of slugfests since Spider-Man, and anticipated the Creeper's free-swinging fracases which would follow some months later. (Nobody, not even Jack Kirby, could portray as satisfying a roundhouse right as Steve Ditko!) Storylines were among the most interesting of the entire Charlton line. Still, with the emphasis on plotting, not much attention was given to the character of the Beetle HIMSELF. Despite all the well-done plotting,



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regardless of the fine supporting cast and the gimmicks such as the Dan Garrett subplot, Ted Kord never came off as a three-dimensional character. For an artist who had created such memorable personality traits for Spider-Man in the early sixties, it was something of a letdown. But the super-heroic concepts were solid, the story-lines intriguing enough to carry the book on their own, and the BEETLE book became one of the best-done backseat offerings of the entire era. It compared favorably with most of the Marvel, DC and Tower offerings of its time.

If not for the end of the Backseat Era in late 1967 and Ditko's stint with DC, the new Beetle might have haunted the comics racks for some time to come. His place in comic history is secure: whenever fans think of Steve Ditko, they remember the third Blue Beetle.

NEXT: THUNDERBOLT, JUDOMASTER, PEACEMAKER, CHARLTON'S SECOND BANANAS, AND THE WRAP-UP

THE SEEKERS
by John Burns

THE SEEKERS
by J M Burns & P Douglas
LATER...BACK AT THE R'NOTEL...
I JUST DON'T BELIEVE IT JACOB !
ALL THIS MONEY...AND JEWELLERY !
LOOKS LIKE THE GUY'S LIFE SAVINGS !
BUT WHY SHOULD BRUCE ALVERTON MAKE A PRESENT OF THIS TO US— FOR WORK ON A CASE THAT WE HADN'T EVEN BEGUN TO SOLVE ?

THE SEEKERS
by J M Burns & P Douglas
LUSCIOUS JEWELS AND LOTSA LOVELY LOVELY MONEY ! AT LAST WE'VE STRUCK IT RICH, JACOB !
COOL IT SUSANNE ! UNA WAS SOMETHING TO SAY ABOUT OUR SUDDEN WINDFALL...
LIKE WHERE'S HER SHARE ! I SUPPOSE !
NO UNA — JACOB HASN'T BEEN DRINKING ! IT'S TRUE ! BRUCE ALVERTON GAVE US ALL THIS LOOT FOR A CASE WE DON'T EVEN SOLVE !
SO YOU WANT US TO DO WHAT ?

THE SEEKERS
by J M Burns & P Douglas
THE SEEKERS H.Q., LONDON. UNA BRIEFS SUSANNE...
DEPOSIT ALL ALVERTON'S MONEY AND VALUABLES IN THE BANK ? DIDN'T OCCUR TO YOU THAT HE MAY BE IN SOME KIND OF DANGER...THAT HE GAVE YOU THE STUFF FOR SAFE-KEEPING ?
AW WELL BYE-BYE LOVELY LOOT ! T WAS NICE TO FEEL LADED WHILE IT LASTED !
JACOB ? KEEP AN EYE ON OUR MR. BRUCE ALVERTON. BUT DON'T "READ ON THE BACK OF HIS NECK." AN OBVIOUS TAIL ON THE MAN MIGHT BE UNFORTUNATE FOR HIM.
WELL DO UNA ! I'LL WATCH OVER HIM LIKE AN INVISIBLE BIG BROTHER !

THE SEEKERS
by J M Burns & P Douglas
RIGHT. I'VE DEPOSITED ALVERTON'S LOOT IN THE BANK AS THE BOSS INSTRUCTED. WHAT NOW, JACOB ?
WE KEEP AN EYE ON ALVERTON'S NEXT BIT OF ESCAPOLOGY AND MAKE SURE HE DOESN'T ESCAPE FROM US !
AYE, AYE ! WHAT'S THIS HE'S GOT THEN— A RAVISHING NEW POLLY, ASSISTANT ?
NOW YOU WILL FIND YOUR WORK A PLEASURE WON'T YOU LOVER ?

The Menomonee Falls Gazette

THE SEEKERS
by J M Burns & P Douglas
GLORIA OF THE AMAZING ALVERTONS HAS VANISHED MYSTERIOUSLY DURING A HOUDINI-LIKE STUNT. NOW HER FATHER IS TO PERFORM THE VERY SAME DANGEROUS FEAT...
MUCH TO THE CONCERN OF HIS NEW ASSISTANT APPLE...
MY GOD YOU LOOK AWFUL MR ALVERTON! SURE YOU WANT TO GO THROUGH WITH THIS?
YES—YES, GET THE CHAINS ON ME AND MAKE THE SPIEL, GIRL!
THE...THE AMAZING ALVERTON WILL NOW DIVE IN CHAINS— THROUGH THE HOOP OF FIRE—AND ESCAPE FROM THE SEABED!
OR WILL HISTORY REPEAT ITSELF?

THE SEEKERS
by J M Burns & P Douglas
BRUCE ALVERTON, ESCAPOLOGIST, MAKES HIS FANTASTIC DIVE...
...THROUGH THE HOOP OF FLAMES
...AND DOWN, DOWN INTO THE OCEAN BED, WHILE ABOVE THE HUSHED SPECTATORS WAIT AND WAIT...
...AND WAIT
R269

THE SEEKERS
by J M Burns & P Douglas
R270
ON THE SEABED BENEATH THE MARINA PIER ESCAPOLOGIST BRUCE ALVERTON ESCAPES FROM HIS CHAINS...
A NEW SECONDS NETHOLE AND SECOND OOH, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN THE AMAZING ALVERTON HAS COME BOBBING UP TO THE SURFACE!
BUT...AS TIME PASSES...
HE'S BEEN DOWN THERE FIVE MINUTES! WHAT THE HELL'S GOING ON?

THE SEEKERS
by J M Burns & P Douglas
ESCAPOLOGIST BRUCE ALVERTON HAS MYSTERIOUSLY VANISHED DURING A HIGH DIVING DISPLAY AND A FRANTIC SEARCH BEGINS...
PRODUCING
SWEET NOTHING THE BOY SEEMS TO HAVE DISAPPEARED WITH LIKE SHE DID HIS DAUGHTER— TWO DAYS AGO!
BUT IT'S A COINCIDENCE JACOB.
...TWO EXPERT SWIMMERS DROWNING IN A SEA THAT'S SO DEADLY CALM!

THE SEEKERS
by John Burns

THE SEEKERS
by J M Burns &
P Douglas
SPECTATORS START DRESSING ON THE PIER PUZZLED BY THE SUDDEN MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE OF ALVERTON THE ESCAPOLOGIST..
WHAT COULD HAVE HAPPENED TO HARRY ?
SEARCH ME DUCKS THEY SAY HIS DAUGHTER VANISHED JUST LIKE THAT A COUPLE O DAYS BACK ! FUNNY BUSINESS
THERE'S SOME SUSANNE IS THERE A MAGICAL CONCERNED OR A SECRET THAT SMELLS LIKE THE FISH AROUND HERE !
IT'S ME ! I'VE GOT A SUBMARINE ON US !
I SUPPOSE SEARCHING THIS MAY HAVE DO WONDERS FOR MY MASTERPIECE
SUSANNE - LOOK OUT !

THE SEEKERS
by J M Burns &
P Douglas
LOOK OUT, SUSANNE - THAT SPEEDBOAT !
IT'S HEADING STRAIGHT FOR US !
EVERYBODY OUT !
MAYBE THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT THEY HAD IN MIND PARTNER !

THE SEEKERS
by J M Burns &
P Douglas
JACOB AND SUSANNE SEARCHING FOR A MISSING ESCAPOLOGIST NARROWLY MISS DEATH WHEN A SPEED BOAT ALMOST RAMS THEM..
ACCIDENT - OR INTENTIONAL ? I WONDER ?
P PASSENGERS
WHAT'S IT LIKE TO LOOK AS YOU'VE SEEN A GHOST

THE SEEKERS
by J M Burns &
P Douglas
QUICK JACOB - GRAB A LOOK !
SEE HIM ? THE PASSENGER HUDDLED IN THE BACK OF THE BOAT..
IT'S BRUCE ALVERTON ! THE 'DROWNED' MAN !

The Menomonee Falls Gazette

THE SEEKERS
by J. M. Burns & P. Douglas
BLAST! NOW THE THINGS DISAPPEARING BEHIND THE LIGHTHOUSE! WAS IT THE MISSING ALVERTON THEY WERE CARRYING AS A PASSENGER?
SHOULD SOON FIND OUT JACOB THESE SPEEDBOAT TRIPS USUALLY DO THE ROUND THE RUGGED ROCKS BY THEN COME BACK AGAIN
BUT NOT THIS TRIP...!

THE SEEKERS
by J. M. Burns & P. Douglas
JACOB AND SUSANNE WAIT FOR THE SPEED BOAT TO MAKE ITS ROUND THE LIGHTHOUSE TOUR AND BACK AGAIN
WELL WELL NO RETURN TRIP DOWN SEEMS
DAMN NOW WE'LL NEVER KNOW WHETHER WAS THE MISSING ALVERTON ON BOARD! IF SO
AND MAKE THE MOST STEAM AHEAD SO WE'RE AFTER THAT BOAT AS THE GEAR SHIFT PROVES
REACH THE PIER
DO YOU TWO HAVE ANY NEWS FOUND SOMETHING BRUCE ALVERTON'S DRESSING ROOM
OH GOD THAT SOUNDS SERIOUS

THE SEEKERS
by J. M. Burns & P. Douglas
WHAT HAVE YOU DISCOVERED?
THIS IN MR. ALVERTON'S DRESSING ROOM
TRADE BUSINESS SUCCEEDS
BUT JACOB ONLY A FEW MINUTES AGO WE SAW HIM ALIVE IN A SPEEDBOAT
SO WHAT'S HE REALLY ESCAPING FROM?

THE SEEKERS
by J. M. Burns & P. Douglas
AT A LONELY PART OF THE COAST
A DESPERATE MAN WAITS FOR HIS LIFE
DON'T BE A FOOL ALVERTON YOU CAN'T GET AWAY
HE'S RIGHT MISTER BLOODY ESCAPOLOGY YOU WON'T ESCAPE DOWN ANY SPACE EARMARKED FOR ME!

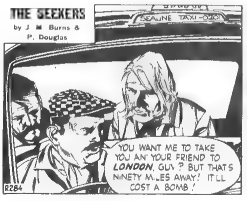
THE SEEKERS
by John Burns

THE SEEKERS
by J M Burns & P Douglas
BRUCE ALVERTON, ESCAPOLOGIST, MAKES A FUTILE ATTEMPT TO FIGHT OFF HIS KIDNAPPERS...
YOU MAY HAVE GOT MY DAUGHTER...
AND WE'VE GOT YOU TOO DAD—MAKE NO MISTAKE ABOUT THAT, GET THE CHAINS ON HIM!
THAT MAKE YOU FEEL MORE AT HOME, MR. AMAZING GET-OUT-OF-ANYTHING ALVERTON? NOW YOU'RE BACK THE SAME AS YOU WERE WHEN OUR SKINDIVERS HELPED YOU FROM THE SEABED...
ANY IF YOU DON'T WANNA BE BOOTED DOWN THERE AGAIN YOU'LL AGREE TO BE NICE AN' CO-OPERATIVE! WHICH IS IT TO BE SHORBZ MAN?

THE SEEKERS
by J M Burns & P Douglas
SO YOU STILL WON'T AGREE TO HELP US IN OUR LITTLE PLAN, OKAY ALVERTON...
...THIS IS JUST TO SHOW YOU I'M A GUY WHO KEEP HIS WORD! SINK YOU STUPID OLD MAN!
BUT A MOMENT LATER, THEIR HYSTERICAL CAPTIVE BROKE FREE TO THE SURFACE...
DID YOU FORGET THAT THE AMAZING ALVERTON'S BEEN ESCAPING FROM THIS SORT OF SET-UP TWICE NIGHTLY FOR YEARS?
NOPE, I JUST WANTED TO SEE IF YOU WERE AS GOOD AS THEY SAY. BUT IF YOU'RE THINKING OF TRYING TO MAKE A BREAK FOR IT, AL BABY THERE'S SOMETHING I GUESS YOU'VE FORGOTTEN...

THE SEEKERS
by J M Burns & P Douglas
GO AHEAD AN ESCAPE, WONDER MAN! BUT WE'RE STILL HOLDING YOUR DAUGHTER, REMEMBER!
ALVERTON KNEW HE WAS BEATEN...
ALL RIGHT... I'LL DO WHAT EVER YOU WANT AS LONG AS YOU DON'T HARM GLORIA...
NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL BEIN' SENSIBLE DAD
BE AWFUL IF ANYTHING SHOULD SPOIL THE PRETTY LOOKS OF THAT DISHY DAUGHTER OF YOURS! JUST KEEP REMEMBERIN THAT DURING THE WHOLE PROJECT FRIEND!
WHAT IS THIS... THIS PROJECT? WHY DO YOU NEED AN ESCAPOLOGIST?

THE SEEKERS
by J M Burns & P Douglas
ESCAPOLOGIST BRUCE ALVERTON HAS BEEN KIDNAPPED...
WHAT IS IT YOU WANT FROM ME?
WE'LL DO A DEAL, YOU STOP ASKING QUESTIONS—AND I WON'T SHOVE IT YOUR THROAT! NOW GET IN THE CAR...
I WON'T BLOODY WELL START!
THAT'S JUST GREAT! WHY THE HELL DIDN'T YOU NICK A RELIABLE ONE WHILE YOU WERE ABOUT IT?
OUT ON THE COAST ROAD THEY WAVE DOWN A PASSING CAB...
COME AGAIN, MATE? YOU WANT ME TO DRIVE YOU BLOKES WHERE?


THE SEEKERS
by J. M. Burns & P. Douglas
GENUINE TAXI-DRIVER
YOU WANT ME TO TAKE YOU AN YOUR FRIEND TO LONDON, GUV ? BUT THAT'S NINETY M..LES AWAY! IT'LL COST A BOMB!
2284

BOMBS WE DON'T CARRY. WILL THIS GET US THERE — AN' FAST?
OH . SURE. YOU BET!

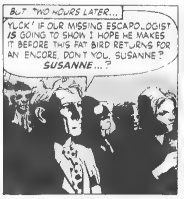
SO LONG, M'STER AMAZING ALVERTON! AIN'T NO ESCAPE WHERE YOU'RE GOIN'!

THE SEEKERS
by J. M. Burns & P. Douglas
UNBEKNOWN TO THE SEEKERS, THE KIDNAPPED ALVERTON IS BEING SPED TO THE BIG CITY...
2285

MEANWHILE...
WHAT THE HELL'S OUR GLEN PLANS A'? FIRST HE LEAVES US A SUICIDE NOTE. THEN WE SPOT HIM LATER. LARGE AS LIFE, TAKING A SPEEDBOAT "RIP!"...
BUT ALL THE BOATS ARE BACK N' NOW — AND STILL NO BRUCE ALVERTON?

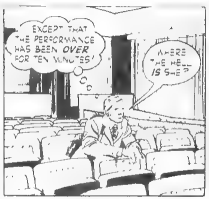
WAIT A MINUTE — THE TIME! IT'S ALMOST SIX-THIRTY. IT'S CRAZY— BUT THERE'S ONE PLACE WE HAVEN'T THOUGHT OF LOOK'NG FOR H'M!

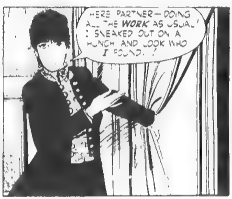
THE SEEKERS
by J. M. Burns & P. Douglas
THE SHOW MUST GO ON, AS THEY SAY AND IF BRUCE ALVERTON'S ALIVE I'VE A HUNCH HE'LL BE HERE
PIER THEATRE THAT EVEN'NG...
SSSHHH!
2286


BUT TWO HOURS LATER...
YUCK! IF OUR MISSING ESCAPOLOGIST IS GOING TO SHOW I HOPE HE MAKES IT BEFORE THIS FAT BIRD RETURNS FOR AN ENCORE. DON'T YOU, SUSANNE? SUSANNE...?

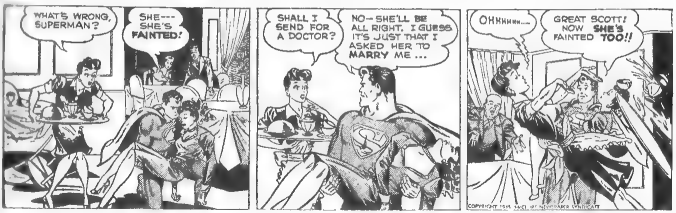
OH NO! NOW SHE'S DISAPPEARED TOO!

THE SEEKERS
by J. M. Burns & P. Douglas
ONE MINUTE SUSANNE DOVE IS SITTING NEXT TO JACOB IN THE THEATRE, AND THE NEXT— SHE'S VANISHED!
COURSE SHE COULD HAVE SLIPPED OUT TO THE LOO TO DODGE THE CORNY SHOW...
2287


EXCEPT THAT THE PERFORMANCE HAS BEEN OVER FOR TEN MINUTES!
WHERE THE HE— IS SHE?


HERE PARTNER — DOING A THE WORK AS USUAL. SNEAKED OUT ON A HUNCH AND LOOK WHO I FOUND!

SUPERMAN by Siegel & Shuster


WHAT'S WRONG, SUPERMAN?
SHE--- SHE'S FAINTED!
SHALL I SEND FOR A DOCTOR?
NO--SHE'LL BE ALL RIGHT. I GUESS IT'S JUST THAT I ASKED HER TO MARRY ME ...
OHHHHHH.....
GREAT SCOTT! NOW SHE'S FAINTED TOO!!

WH-WHAT HAPPENED?
THERE! YOU ALL RIGHT NOW?
I--I DON'T KNOW. ARE YOU REALLY GOING TO MARRY HER??
CERTAINLY I'M GOING TO MARRY HER! SHE JUST ACCEPTED ME!
OH...
DARLING!
IMAGINE! SUPERMAN GETTING MARRIED!
NEXT IT'LL BE VAN JOHNSON! WHAT HAVE US GIRLS TO LOOK FORWARD TO?!?

OH-IT'S SO WONDERFUL! LITTLE ME--I'M GOING TO BE MRS. SUPERMAN! HOW I'VE DREAMED OF THIS!
ER-AH-(GULP) THEY'RE ALL WATCHING US....
GOODNESS--I ALMOST FORGOT! YOU WAIT RIGHT HERE--I'LL BE BACK IN A MOMENT.
BUT-- WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
TO PHONE THE DAILY PLANET, SILLY! DON'T YOU REALIZE THIS IS THE BIGGEST SCOOP OF THE YEAR?

SHE AGREES TO MARRY ME, AND THE FIRST THING SHE THINKS OF IS PHONING IN HER BIG NEWSPAPER SCOOP! I'VE GOT TO TEACH HER A LESSON!
SHORTLY AFTER...
THAT YOU, LOIS? WELL--CONGRATULATIONS AND BEST WISHES FOR-- HUH? WHAT DO YOU MEAN, HOW DID WE KNOW?
THE STORY WAS JUST PHONED IN A MOMENT AGO BY CLARK KENT! HE WAS RIGHT THERE IN THE RESTAURANT WHEN IT HAPPENED!
OH!!

The Menomonee Falls Gazette

OF ALL THE LOW-DOWN TRICKS! CLARK KENT SCOOPED ME AGAIN--AND ON MY OWN ENGAGEMENT!!
BUT, LOIS--WHEN WE'RE SO HAPPY, HOW CAN YOU BEGRUDGE CLARK A LITTLE THING LIKE A SCOOP ON A MERE NEWSPAPER STORY?
AFTER ALL, YOU AND CLARK ARE OLD FRIENDS. THIS IS NO TIME FOR PROFESSIONAL JEALOUSY. YOU KNOW HE'S REALLY VERY FOND OF YOU.
(--FOND OF ME-- HMPH! AND I THINK I KNOW HOW I CAN MAKE HIM SUFFER FOR THIS LATEST DIRTY TRICK HE PLAYED ON ME!--)
I AGREED TO MARRY YOU, SUPERMAN. BUT I HAVE TO MAKE ONE CONDITION. CLARK KENT MUST BE BEST MAN AT OUR WEDDING!!
(--OW! THAT'S GOING TO COMPLICATE MATTERS--IN AS MUCH AS KENT AND I ARE THE SAME PERSON!!--)
COPYRIGHT 1941 MCCLURE NEWSPAPER SYNDICATE

LOIS LANE HAS JUST AGREED TO MARRY SUPERMAN, BUT SHE INSISTS THAT CLARK KENT BE BEST MAN--AND OF COURSE KENT AND SUPERMAN ARE THE SAME PERSON!
ALL THIS CONCERN FOR CLARK KENT WHEN YOU'RE MARRYING ME, AFTER ALL! THE GROOM IS SUPPOSED TO CHOOSE THE BEST MAN!
WHY, SUPERMAN, DARLING, YOU SOUND JEALOUS!
ME, JEALOUS OF CLARK? NOT A CHANCE! BUT HOW DO YOU KNOW HE'LL AGREE TO BE BEST MAN?
OF COURSE HE'LL AGREE! WHAT AN IDEA!
COPYRIGHT 1941 MCCLURE NEWSPAPER SYNDICATE
MEANWHILE...
GENTS--OUR MOST FORMIDABLE FOE IS ABOUT TO MARRY! WE MUST ALLOW NOTHING TO INTERFERE WITH HIS PLANS!
GAUNT, ARE YOU CRAZY?

SUPERMAN'S HOUNDED US FOR WEEKS! HE'S JUGGED HALF THE MOB! AND YOU WANNA GUARANTEE HIS HAPPINESS BY LETTING NOTHING STAND IN THE WAY OF HIS MARRIAGE!
HAPPINESS! HA!
HE WHO SHARES HIS LIFE WITH A WOMAN BECOMES A SNIVELING TOADY! HIS KEEN, MALE INSTINCTS VANISH! HE BECOMES FAT AND FOOLISH! IF SUPERMAN MARRIES, HE WON'T BE HALF THE WORRY HE IS NOW!
SO YOU HATE WOMEN! SO WHAT! THERE'S PLENTY HAPPILY MARRIED GUYS! GIMME A PRACTICAL REASON FOR HELPING SUPERMAN MARRY, AND I'LL LISTEN, BUT--
PRACTICAL, EH?
DON'T YOU REALIZE THAT MARRIAGE PROVIDES THE INVULNERABLE SUPERMAN WITH AN ACHILLES' HEEL? WE CAN'T HARM HIM, BUT HE'S BOUND TO LAY OFF US RATHER THAN HAVE HIS WIFE BECOME A TARGET!
COPYRIGHT 1941 MCCLURE NEWSPAPER SYNDICATE

REMEMBER, WE'VE TWICE ESCAPED CAPTURE BY ENDANGERING LOIS LANE AND DIVERTING SUPERMAN'S ATTENTION; WITH SUPERMAN MARRIED TO HER, WE CAN REALLY HAMSTRING HIM, BECAUSE--
--HELL, KNOW WHATEVER MOVE HE MAKES AGAINST US, HIS BELOVED WIFE WILL BECOME A TARGET. SO--WE MUST SEE TO IT THAT NOTHING STANDS IN THE WAY OF HIS MARRIAGE.
I'M SOLD, GAUNT.
COPYRIGHT 1941 MCCLURE NEWSPAPER SYNDICATE
AT THE DAILY PLANET OFFICE...
LOIS IS IN THERE TALKING. TSK! HE'S BEEN TO CLARK NOW--ASKING HIM TO BE BEST MAN...
EDITORIAL
CARRYING A TORCH FOR LOIS FOR YEARS, I WONDER HOW HELL TAKE IT?

ST Pocket Checklist

Note: Books marked "*" are published for direct sales and subscriptions only.

- ☐ BUGS BUNNY #233
- ☐ BUGS BUNNY #234
- ☐ CHIP 'N' DALE #76
- ☐ COMICS AND STORIES #496
- ☐ DAFFY DUCK #140
- ☐ DONALD DUCK #237
- ☐ FLASH GORDON #36
- ☐ GRIMM'S GHOST STORIES #58
- ☐ HUEY, DEWEY AND LOUIE, JUNIOR WOODCHUCKS #73
- ☐ LITTLE LULU #264
- ☐ PINK PANTHER #81
- ☐ SUPER GOOF #48
- ☐ TOM AND JERRY #340
- ☐ TUROK, SON OF STONE #129
- ☐ TWEETY AND SYLVESTER #113
- ☐ TWEETY AND SYLVESTER #114
- ☐ UNCLE SCROOGE #194
- ☐ YOSEMITE SAM #76

- ☐ ATTACK #34
- ☐ BATTLEFIELD ACTION #74
- ☐ FIGHTIN' ARMY #157
- ☐ FIGHTIN MARINES #162
- ☐ GHOST MANOR #62
- ☐ GUNFIGHTERS #72
- ☐ HAUNTED #61

- ☐ *DESTROYER DUCK #1 [Delayed]

January 1982

- ☐ *CAPTAIN VICTORY #4
- ☐
- ☐ HEAVY METAL #57 [VS#11]
- ☐ NATIONAL LAMPOON #143 [V2#43]
- ☐
- ☐ ACTION COMICS #530
- ☐ ALL STAR SQUADRON #8
- ☐ ARAK/SON OF THUNDER #8
- ☐ BATMAN #346
- ☐ THE BEST OF DC #23 [Year's Best]
- ☐ THE BRAVE AND THE BOLD #185
- ☐ CAPTAIN CARROT AND HIS AMAZING ZOO CREW #2
- ☐ DC COMICS PRESENTS #44
- ☐ DC SPECIAL BLUE RIBBON DIGEST #20 [Dark Mansions of Forbidden Love]
- ☐ DETECTIVE COMICS #513
- ☐ THE FLASH #308
- ☐ GHOSTS #111
- ☐ G. I. COMBAT #240
- ☐ GREEN LANTERN #151
- ☐ HOUSE OF MYSTERY #303
- ☐ JONAH HEX #59
- ☐ JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA #201
- ☐ THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES #286
- ☐ THE NEW ADVENTURES OF SUPERBOY #28
- ☐ THE NEW TEEN TITANS #18
- ☐ THE PHANTOM ZONE #4
- ☐ SGT. ROCK #363
- ☐ SUPERMAN #370
- ☐ THE SUPERMAN FAMILY #217
- ☐ THE UNEXPECTED #221
- ☐ UNKNOWN SOLDIER #262
- ☐ WARLORD #56
- ☐ WEIRD WAR TALES #110
- ☐ WONDER WOMAN #290
- ☐ WORLD'S FINEST COMICS #278
- ☐ THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #227
- ☐ THE AVENGERS #218
- ☐ CAPTAIN AMERICA #268
- ☐ CONAN THE BARBARIAN #133
- ☐ CRAZY MAGAZINE #84
- ☐ DAREDEVIL #181
- ☐ DAZZLER #14
- ☐ THE DEFENDERS #106
- ☐ DENNIS THE MENACE #6
- ☐ DENNIS THE MENACE DIGEST #1
- ☐ DOCTOR STRANGE #52
- ☐ FANTASTIC FOUR #241
- ☐ GHOST RIDER #67
- ☐ THE INCREDIBLE HULK #270
- ☐ IRON MAN #157
- ☐ *KA-ZAR THE SAVAGE #13
- ☐ *MARVEL GRAPHIC NOVEL #1 [Delayed]
- ☐ MARVEL PAPERBACK #3 [Star Trek]
- ☐ MARVEL PAPERBACK #4 [Incredible Hulk]
- ☐ MARVEL TALES #138
- ☐ MARVEL TEAM-UP #116
- ☐ MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE #86
- ☐ MASTER OF KUNG FU #111
- ☐ *MICRONAUTS #40
- ☐ *MOON KNIGHT #18
- ☐ PETER PARKER, THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #65
- ☐ POWER MAN AND IRON FIST #80
- ☐ ROM #29
- ☐ SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN #74
- ☐ SPIDER-WOMAN #43
- ☐ STAR WARS #58
- ☐ THOR #318
- ☐ THE UNCANNY X-MEN #156
- ☐ THE VERY BEST OF DENNIS THE MENACE DIGEST #1
- ☐ WHAT IF? #32 [Avengers]

Obituaries

Russ Manning, longtime TARZAN artist and comic book illustrator for Western Publishing, died December 1st of cancer after a long illness. He began his comic book career in 1952 when he drew the BROTHERS OF THE SPEAR strip in TARZAN, and spent the next sixteen years at Western Publishing, drawing westerns (DALE EVANS, REX ALLEN, WYATT EARP, GENE AUTRY, RAWHIDE), TV adaptations (77 SUNSET STRIP, DANNY THOMAS, RICKY NELSON, SEA HUNT) and movie adaptations (ROB ROY, BEN HUR, CAPTAIN SINDBAD, SUMMER MAGIC) and perhaps his two most important works for comic books: MAGNUS, ROBOT FIGHTER, which he also wrote, and KORAK, SON OF TARZAN, which led to his assignment to the TARZAN OF THE APES comic book when his mentor, Jesse Marsh died in 1966. His fine work on his adaptations of the original Edgar Rice Burroughs novels into comic form for the comic book brought him to the attention of the E.R.B. Estate, who replaced longtime TARZAN comic strip artist John Celardo with Manning in 1968. He then handled the daily until 1973, while continuing on the Sunday through 1977, and took on the daily and Sunday STAR WARS strip in 1978. He was forced to leave the strip only a short time later due to illness. He died at age 52, leaving a wife and children, and a substantial medical debt. The debt is being somewhat relieved through donations to the Russ Manning Fund, courtesy of the Modjeska Firefighters Association, Star Route 797, Orange, CA 92667.

Russ was especially kind to us when we were publishing the GAZETTE and his TARZAN strip, donating artwork for our continual fund-raising efforts. We will miss him both on a personal and a professional level.

Dr. Fredric Wertham died November 18th at age 86. The psychiatrist and psychotherapist is most known to comics fandom as the man who authored SEDUCTION OF THE INNOCENT, a significant and noteworthy milestone in comics history. The book outlined the many ways he felt his research had shown the harmfulness comic book reading had on American youth, and called for stricter enforcement of publishing codes, all of which ultimately caused the formation of the Comics Code Authority, a boycott of many comics groups by distributors and the ultimate demise of all but nine comics companies by 1957. He became a figure of intense dislike by many fans, and Wertham responded to that by doing a study of early '70s comics fandom in a subsequent book called THE WORLD OF FANZINES: A SPECIAL FORM OF COMMUNICATION. Surprisingly, fandom didn't come out as something to be eliminated; he believed them to be constructive.

Dr. Wertham's influence continues even now, thirty years after the publication of SEDUCTION in the prices being charged throughout fandom for particular issues cited as exceptionally horrible examples of every major aberration.

Pacific Coming Comics

*CAPTAIN VICTORY No. 4, April. The adventure continues with story and art by Jack Kirby and Thibedeaux. This issue also features the debut of a new back-up feature, "The Goozlebobber," the mascot of the Galactic Rangers. Kirby did the cover. [January]

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Bigger – and better – than ever!

Captain Kentucky
MR. DELUGUINI... I HOPE YOU REALIZE THAT YOUR REMAKE OF "SUPERMAN," REWRITTEN FOR MY LIFE, IS TOTALLY INACCURATE AND PREPOSTEROUS!!!
THATSA' NOKAY. I DONTA MIND... SO FAR INNA' MY TEST FOOTAGE YOJVE GROWNA' UP ANNA' MOVED TO LOUISVILLE TO EMBARK ONNA' YOU SUPER-HERO CAREER LET'S KEEPA' WATCHIN'...
Episode 104
© Don Rosa
YOUR FIRSTA' CHANCE TO APPEAR INNA' PUBLIC AS CAPTANA KENTUCK ISSA WHEN DA' 32 ALIVE SKYCAM CRASHES ANNI ISSA' HANGIN' OFF DA' TOP OF DA' CITIZENS FIDELITY BUILDING WITHA' KEN ROWLAND DANGLIN' BY A SEAT BELT!
WHAT... WHAT'S WRONG WITH KEN ROWLAND? HE LOOKS SORT OF... EFFEMINATE!
OH... THATSA THE ONLY ROLE I COULD FIND FOR MARGOT KIDDER IN THIS VERSION! BUT LOOK! YOJVE ABOUT TO CHANGE INTO CAPTANA KENTUCK!
I HOPE YOU DONTA MIND CHRISTOPHER REEVE IN YOUR ROLE, I MEAN, WITH YOUR RED HAIR, SKINNY ARMS AN LEGS, ANNA' POT BELLY, YOU JUSTA ALL WRONG FOR DA' PART?
NO, NO, QUITE ALRIGHT! I WAS JUST THINKING ITS THE ONLY AUTHENTICITY DECIED ASPECT OF THE ENTIRE FILM? CARRY ON.
CK'S PRE-RECORDED SECRET MESSAGE: EVER SEE WAITRESSES REFILLING HALFEMPTY CATSUP BOTTLES SO THEY'S ALWAYS LOOK NICE FKNEW? BUT DID YOU EVER WONDER IF THE FATSUP ON THE BOTTOM OF THOSE BOTTLES HAS BEEN THERE SINCE 1959?
SO YOU FLYA' UP AN' CATCH DA' FALLING SKYCAM!
YES... JUST LIKE IN "SUPERMAN."
GLOM!
WELL... NOTTA' QUITE. WE TRY TO BE TRUE TO DA' SPIRIT OFA' DA SUBJECT MATTER.
OOPS.
THEN WE SHOW YOU RACIN' ALL OVER LOUISVILLE PERFORMIN' SUPER-DEEDS, INCLUDIN' SAVING A LIGHTNING STRUCK AIRLINER WITH MAYOR STANSBURY ON BOARD
INSTEAD OF THE PRESIDENT, HUH?
YES, BUT WE MAKE A SLIGHTA' CHANGE INNA' DIS SCENE ALSO...
JUSTA FOR ALD-ENCE APPEA!
OOPS.
AND WHO IS GENE HACKMAN SUPPOSED TO BE IN THIS MOVIE?
AND I STOP HIM, RIGHT?
FRANK METTS? INNA' MY MOVIE? HE BUYS UP ALLA' DA LAND BEYOND PLAINVIEW ANNA' TRIES TO SET OFF NUCLEAR DEVICES TO CAUSE DA REST OF DA EAST END TO FALLA INTO DA' OHIO RIVER?
NO, YOU SCREWA' UP, AS USUAL. FINALLY GOV. BROWN FORCES METTS TO EITHER DIVEST HIMSELF OF DA' LAND DUE TO CONFLICTS-OF-INTEREST, OR GIVE BROWN FIRST CHOICE AT A CONDO SITE.
AND HERE'S THE SCENE WHERE I MAKE THE EARTH SPIN BACKWARDS LIKE IN "SUPERMAN."
YES, BUT OUR VERSION IS MORE SCIENTIFIC INSTEAD OF SOMETHING SILLY LIKE TURNING TIME BACKWARD. ALL YOU SUCCEED IN DOING ISSA' CAUSING EVERY MAN, WOMAN AN' CHILD ON DA' PLANET TO FALLA' DOWN!
NEXT WEEK: SUPERMAN, CAPTAIN KENTUCK'N' MORE!

HOLLYWOOD
CAPTAIN KENTUCKY IN HOLLYWOOD
CAPTAIN KENTUCKY IN HOLLYWOOD
CAPTAIN KENTUCKY IN HOLLYWOOD
EPISODE 105: D-Day R.I.P.
CAPTAIN KENTUCKY IN HOLLYWOOD
CAPTAIN
So Tella' me, Captain Kentuck... other than total disapproval, do you hava' any other reactions to my proposed "Captain Kentuck, the movie"?
Just that I wouldn't want it shown in any theaters that sell electric football's! our biggest cinemas back in Louisville apparently can't stay in business without selling nitwit neon football's!
Oh, never mind... let's get the rest of this nonsense over with?
Sure t'ing! You gonna love part II! it opena' up with a flashback to the openin' of part I where we saw you father, the U of L professor, gettin' 3 other U of L personalities thrown outta' college.
And who are they?
Terrance Stamp plays "General Zit", whose experiments of causin' terminal acne in lab mice witha' Hershey bar injections, you father thought were.. weird.
Sarah Douglas is "Ursatz", whom you father felt was a little backward ina' her anti-era stand, ana' belief dat college women should'a only study grad level home economics.
An' Jack O'Halloran plays "Nil", whom you father had removed from an athletic scholarship because he found nil not only had the true 'cardinal' fighting spirit, the true 'cardinal' athletic prowess, but also an actual cardinal's I.Q.!
General Zit vows vengeance an' his father an' his heirs, an' Gene Hackman as Frank Metts teams up with dese three to get his revenge ona' you for lousin up dat real estate deal in part I!
Z.
Speaking of Jocks: College is an institution of higher learning; sports are simply mass entertainment. So why do the scholars eat hamburger while the jocks get (equally nutritious) steak? Should be vice versa.
Ina' dis scene we see General Zit holdin' Mayor Stansbury, instead of da' president, hostage. We justa put a cheap white toupe on E.G. Marshall instead of a cheap black toupe.
Oho! and I'd been wondering why Valerie Perrine wasn't playing Gene Hackman's henchperson like in "Superman"! in your version, you have her with Mayor Stansbury. Appropriate.
At any rate, we go through the scenes lika' in "Superman II" where you super-peoples fight ana' devastate a section a' da' city's
?!? So where did those three get super powers? Oh, sorry. I guess if that made sense it would be incongryous with the rest of the movie?
You vanquish the three baddies, an' as for Gene "Frank Metts" Hackman, here we see him goin' nuts an' tearin' his hair out (so dat he's bald lika' in "Superman") because he just realized dat da' section of town you wrecked was his DuPont Square!
I don't know why I sat through this idiocy! Arrividerci, Mr. DeLinguini, "baby"?
Ev! Nobody walks out on Dino DeLinguini! Okay, so I'll hava' up! Take my advice and get into TV production... your lack of respect for the audience's intelligence would be right at home there!
GRUNT!
Next week: C.K.'s true origin retold in the 2nd anniversary episode! plus another free giveaway offer!

PAUL TEMPLE
by Durbridge & Mendoza

PAUL TEMPLE
by FRANCIS DURBRIDGE
THE TEMPLES WAIT TILL THE HI-JACKED AIRCRAFT TAKES OFF. THEN...
SUDDENLY I FEEL VERY LONELY.
AND I FEEL JUST TOO THIRSTY TO BE SETTING OUT ON A LONG, HOT WALK
THERE'S A VILLAGE UP IN THE HILLS OVER THERE, PAUL
MY KINGDOM FOR A HORSE, A MAP AND A BOTTLE OF WINE!

PAUL TEMPLE
by FRANCIS DURBRIDGE
25
D'YOU REALISE PAUL, THAT WE HAVEN'T SEEN A LIVING SOUL SINCE WE LEFT THE AIR-STRIP?
WELL, THERE'S YOUR FIRST LIVING SOUL, STEVE. GET YOUR PHRASE BOOK OUT WHILE I TRY TO WAKE HIM
EXCUSE ME, SIR!
U-U-R-RGH!

PAUL TEMPLE
by FRANCIS DURBRIDGE
26
IN THIS REMOTE VILLAGE, THEY DO NOT SEEM TO SPEAK THE SORT OF GREEK USED IN STEVE'S PHRASE BOOK...
IT'S HOPELESS, PAUL! ARE YOU SURE WE'RE IN GREECE?
WELL, IT WAS A LONG WALK, BUT I DON'T REMEMBER CROSSING ANY FRONTIERS!
AH, THIS LOOKS MORE PROMISING. THE LOCAL GENDARME OR WHATEVER, AND WIDE AWAKE AT THAT!

PAUL TEMPLE
by FRANCIS DURBRIDGE
27
YOU ENGLEESH? I CAN HELP?
THANK YOU... WE NEED A TELEPHONE, URGENTLY
PLEASE TO COM' THIS WAY!
NO GOOD TRYING TO EXPLAIN TO HIM ABOUT THE HI-JACK— IT WOULD TAKE ALL DAY. WE MUST GET THROUGH TO ATHENS

[Continued from page 6]

KEVIN T. BROWN, 7846F W. Lawrence Avenue, Norridge, IL 60656: Even though I entered the DC Trivia Contest and lost, I still had fun looking through all my old comics trying to find each hero. I knew right away that I had lost, but I don't care. By the way, the Human Cannonball's secret identity (which wasn't really secret) was revealed in SUPERMAN FAMILY #191 on page 6 of the LOIS LANE story. Thanks for listening.

[That was a good way to get even, Kevin -- you made me look it up. As a public service, I'll save everyone else some time: Human Cannonball's secret i.d. was Ryan Chase. MT]

KEVIN AFFOLDER, 422 McKenney Road, Vincennes, IN 47591: #197 was great. The article and index of the late, lamented Tower Comics Group was superb; but the obituary of that line's prime-mover, as you (or should I say, Lou Mougin) referred to him, Wally Wood, was a rather spirit-dampening and an ironic note for the very issue covering "his best commercial comics work of the sixties." I sincerely hope that John V. Carbonaro and Co. can continue the fine tradition of the original THUNDER AGENTS run, but I feel the loss of color will be a very negative factor, as I have always felt that Tower's books' being so brightly colorful was a big plus to their being popular and successful. As to other colorless Towers, I have a friend who would be interested in acquiring the four Tower paperbacks; if you know of any for sale/trade, let me know about it. I, myself, can't locate Comely Comix's CAPTAIN CANUCK #2 (two copies, one for a friend) and Gold Key's JOHN STEED AND EMMA PEEL #1 (THE AVENGERS #1 in the indicia), plus the giant with no number (if it exists, 1967) listed on page 101 of Michael Pesnick's THE OFFICIAL PRICE GUIDE TO COMIC AND SCIENCE FICTION BOOKS, Third Edition, 1979. My friend could use another Tower Comic, too, FIGHT THE ENEMY #3.

[Glad to help you find your needed issues. However, that AVENGERS giant you mention is probably an English annual and not a Gold Key; it used to appear in Overstreet's GUIDE, but was removed at least five years ago. Which is what happens when a book like Pesnick's is compiled by simply copying all its information from another book instead of researching the comics himself. MT]

JON COLVIN, 130 King Street, Rockford, IL 61103: I wanted to take a second to tell you I enjoy each issue of TCR I purchase at my local comics shop! Thanks for a job well-done!!

Now, I need your help please... I am missing the Sunday page of October 25, 1981 and all five Sundays in November of the color strip WORLD'S GREATEST SUPERHEROES-SUPERMAN. Anyway you can possibly steer or guide me to a source to find these episodes wanted? Thanks for anything you can possibly do!

[Our local paper carries the dailies and not the Sundays, so there's no way for us to find them for you, but we probably have a few collectors/dealers out there who could help you out.

By the way, if somebody has a complete-to-date run of the strip, I'd like to buy one myself. MT]

WILLIAM C. SCHULZ, 1726 N. Kutch, Flagstaff, AZ 86001: I thought I'd drop you a short note to share a bit of concern regarding the current direction of TCR. My own approach to comic collecting is to troop down to the local newsstand every Monday, pick up a pile of DCs and Marvels and read them all between then and the following Monday. In a typical week I'll get one or two I really enjoy, about six pieces of acceptable hackwork, and one or two clinkers. Most of it is not actually inspiring, but I'm not tied to fixed hours for my entertainment like television and it does get my mind off my troubles which is the purpose of escapist literature.

Now the point of this ramble is that a lot of what is now coming down from TCR is pretty irrelevant to this form of the hobby. The DC and Marvel news is important, the coming comics mildly helpful, and the letters sometimes comment on current comics. But editorial comment on current super-hero comics has declined to almost the vanishing point. Now I applaud your attempts to introduce readers to other forms of the hobby; I understand your fear that people can OD on super-heroes, but I think it unwise to give up all critical interest in what is possibly the most common form of the hobby, and certainly the way most people get into it. Don't the X-Men ever do anything worth commenting on? What do you think of John Byrne's FANTASTIC FOUR? Is Frankie Raye a bold new creation or another case of Marvel Incest? What about Roy Thomas's inability to understand that World War II is about as relevant to most readers as the Crimean War, and that we are all REALLY TIRED of Evil Nazis. And why did the DC Barons, after watching THE INVADERS fall on its face at Marvel, even let him try a DC version? Here imitation borders on compulsiveness, copying the competition's failures. How about Elektra -- is she really a new departure?

I'm not suggesting that the material you are now running is irrelevant or uninteresting. I look forward to each issue of TCR and read almost all of it. But I do think that there ought to be room for a page devoted to the monthly Long-John set, stuff where I could pick up the actual comic and say, "By gosh, he's right--they have changed Lois's hairstyle."

[I fully understand your point, but I don't believe we've been neglecting the current scene entirely. As you mention, there is discussion of current comics in the letter columns. But we've also been carrying Sam Kujava's A COMIC READER for the last six months, and that's the point and purpose of his column. He is picking out small points and commenting on them, and perhaps he'll pick up on some of the topics you've brought up.

But I can't do it myself because in most cases, I haven't read the current stuff. This isn't something I've exactly kept secret, but it derives from a combination of disappointment and lack of time, my comics reading time now being devoted to catching up on the past forty years of funny animal and humor comics I've managed to amass in a very short time. As you mention yourself, comics are escapist literature -- and when I have to write about what I've read, it removes a lot of the enjoyment for me.

For the record, I've managed to remain current only on JUSTICE LEAGUE, ALL-STAR SQUADRON and NEW TEEN TITANS. The obvious implication is that I enjoy reading group comics, and that they're all DCs, which is only partially correct (I like solo comics and I like particular Marvels as well). Since one of your queries was about ALL-STAR SQUADRON, I can actually discuss it with some idea of what I'm talking about. The chief difference in THE INVADERS (which you term a failure) and ALL-STAR SQUADRON (which you also don't seem to like) is that one is a Marvel comic and the other a DC. I would mention that the latter is populated with a lot of characters who've rarely, if ever, been treated with the respect or intelligence they deserved in the past thirty years, while Marvel had done fine renditions of Captain America and Sub-Mariner in their sixties incarnations, removing the novelty of seeing them appear in the '40s. I would also say that -- and this is taking nothing away from Frank Robbins, whose style was pretty inappropriate for an action-packed book like THE INVADERS-- the current, more realistic artwork, in large part due to the excellent inking of Jerry Ordway, is much easier to look at. Add to that the Marvel-type mythos being woven by Roy Thomas into ALL-STAR SQUADRON (which is fascinating on a num-

ber of levels), and the fact that everybody doesn't think WWII is irrelevant, and you have a lot of reasons why DC felt that a new/old JSA book was a good idea. Even if you DO feel the '40s are irrelevant, there's absolutely no reason why you can't view the period as being as alien as that of CONAN or WARLORD or STAR WARS. Earth-Two IS a different world, after all; evidently governed by similar but differing laws of nature and science. (One large difference I've always felt explained a lot of things is that aging on Earth-Two -- or the lifespan of the average human being, if you will -- is far longer than that of the average comic reader. And if you also apply the retardation of age to all other Earth-One and even Marvel characters, you can logically explain what are seemingly huge descrepancies in comic book "realism." We can't play around with dates -- although some revisionists in books like SUPERBOY are needlessly attempting to do just that -- so simply allowing the idea that human beings live up to twice our own age is the easiest and least confusing application. Nobody ever dies of old age in comics anyhow.)

The only other recent comments I could make would be these. How come the Hawk and the Dove, in the much-praised BRAVE AND THE BOLD story by Alan Brennert, were shown to have become those characters "twelve years ago," putting each in his late twenties -- when, as members of the original Teen Titans they were teenagers alongside other teens Robin, Kid Flash, Wonder Girl, et al., who are STILL shown to be teens? Why was Adrian Gonzales, a Philippino with an oriental-style and necessarily second-hand familiarity with U.S. forties fashions and ambiance chosen to replace Rich Buckler on ALL-STAR SQUADRON? And can someone please explain to me-- or Gerry Conway and Len Wein--how to pronounce the word "shure" (JUSTICE LEAGUE #198, page 7, panel three) so that it sounds appreciably different than the correct, if less "western-sounding" "sure"? (Not that it would help make that issue, or the one following, more entertaining; the pair stand out even among Conway's run on the book as being the most pointless, boring and badly told story the JLA has ever participated in. I guess, in order for a guest-appearance of other characters to be appealing, you have to care at least a little about them; I couldn't think of four characters, western or otherwise, I care for less than Jonah Hex, Scalphunter, Cinnamon or the current version of Bat Lash. Sorry.) MT]

T.M. MAPLE, #755, Toronto, Ontario CANADA: I'd like to comment on a couple of matters raised in the letter from Alexandre Koehn that appeared in your COLLECTING COMICS column in #196.

(1) Mr. Koehn asserts that he feels that eventually comics will be available only in comics specialty stores and that he furthermore sees nothing wrong with this since many other items, such as records, are bought only from specialty stores of one kind or another. You point out, correctly, that records are sold at outlets other than specialty ones and (significantly, I feel) that a consumer's first purchase is usually made at a general-purpose, rather than specialty, store. However, you ignored another vital factor, perhaps because it's so obvious: The sheer number of outlets. There are far, far more record stores than comic shops. If comics were available only at specialty stores their scarcity would mean that it would be highly unlikely for anyone to simply stumble acrocc one or buy on impulse. For instance, here in Metropolitan Toronto there are, to my knowledge, just four specialty stores (and that's in 240 square miles), whereas, just down the street there's a milk store and a variety store that each stock around twenty record titles, and within a mile there's the local (small) mall that has two record stores plus a department store with a record department larger in area than three of the four comic shops.

(2) Mr. Koehn states with obvious pride that he doesn't make a profit off necessities, but rather he deals in a luxury item. This position involves puzzling logic at best and puzzling morality at worst. It is not justifiable to gouge the consumer, regardless of whether or not you're selling luxuries or necessities. (Especially since people often spend money on luxuries that would be better spent on necessities, e.g. a father scrimping on children's clothing in order to buy cigarettes or beer.) A person who sells necessities could well take pride in his work since he is supplying a true need instead of catering to frivolities which often tend to create a demand where none existed before. There is nothing wrong with making a profit, since it provides the incentive and means for running a business. It is the nature and extent of the profit, not the product sold (except where the product is clearly detrimental) that determines the validity of the enterprise in moral terms.

Whatever happened to...Dick Duck?

STEVEN WOODER, 17493 Zanger, Mt. Clemens, MI 48044: After reading Alexandre Koehn's letter in TCR #196, I felt compelled to write. What Alexandre is saying seems to be true, but I have noticed that the dealers who continuously 'gouge prices" and treat fans as if the fans consider themselves "saints" are the ones who generally are given the labels "manipulator," "thief" or "spoiler."

I am a fan. I do not (and never have) consider myself a candidate for sainthood. I am merely someone who appreciates the writing and art that appears in today's comics.

I also have a lot of respect for the dealer I purchase my weekly comics from. All of his customers feel the same way. If Alexandre Koehn feels that the entire world is against him as a dealer then one has to question his methods of business. My dealer, Larry Daher, treats every customer that walks through his doors with the same special treatment that the does long-time friends. He does his best to complete runs for his customers. If, due to a mistake that he has made (Hey! Dealers are human too!) he will do everything in his power (to the extent of pulling the missing issue from his own personal collection) to fill in the missing issue. I have watched it all happen! I spend more time at the local store than I do with my own family! In short, he has instilled the personal, friendly approach to a business that, in my area, sorely needed it. I am sure that, given the opportunity, all of Larry's customers will jump to to the defense that the dealer/fan relationship can be a good one. I am sure that they also feel as I do, that Larry Daher has become, at 17, the best damn comic dealer in the state of Michigan! A salute to a dealer from a "saintly" fan. I would hope that more fans all over the country will make their feelings of gratitude towards their dealers known. Thanx, Larry -- I couldn't do it without you!!

AL LECUYER, 2401 Rucker Avenue #10, Everett, WA 98201: I'd like to make a few comments on Alexandre Koehn's letter in TCR #196 and your answer. Both of your comments struck home with me.

I started collecting when I was in the sixth grade. Buying only what was released on the stands, my collection grew rapidly. Soon, though, I wasn't satisfied with just the new releases. I ordered a catalogue and a fanzine subscription.

To say the least, I was disappointed. The prices in both the catalogue and the fanzines were prohibitive to a teenage collector. Examining a few catalogues and price lists over the next few years I gave up on that source and began sorting through boxes at flea markets and thrift stores.

Finally, I graduated from high school, joined the ranks of the unemployed and gave up buying all but a few new releases. Joining the Army ended my

unemployment and when it was over I found myself living three thousand miles away and able to buy all the new releases I could get my hands on.

Now living an easy driving distance from Seattle, I have access to a few comic dealers. You may have guessed it -- their prices are generally still prohibitive.

Now to Mr. Koehn's correspondence. The dealers here seem to respect my hobby. But then, every retailer I have known respects the present-day selling price of ACTION #1 and even that of FANTASTIC FOUR #1. I'm sure all the dealers in the world respect that. One way or another.

On the other hand, retailers don't tack on 20¢ to the cover price of an issue because two more issues of the same title has been released. The dealers I have mentioned do this.

If you went into the same retailer every week to buy comics, the personnel there will get to know you and if you were friendly enough, I'm sure they would begin to save mint copies of your favorite titles for you. I've made that arrangement myself in the past.

I do agree that since there are good people and bad people in everyone's eyes, the same must apply to dealers. Supply and demand though makes it hard to warm up to anyone who supplies the price they demand.

I don't believe the direct sales concept will lead to the collapse of all but one comics publisher. I think it will lead to more companies producing a few titles with smaller copy runs. (More high prices for back issues?)

Recently, my wife began collecting WARLORD. Starting around issue #37 from the stands, she has nearly completed the run. She was appalled at the prices dealers wanted ever for the later issues, but she compared prices between the dealers and seems very satisfied with what she got. If not for the dealers' existence, I doubt her interest would have lasted this long. That alone makes me happy with the existing dealers. If not for them, my wife and I would not share as much interest in our now-mutual hobby.

The problems with pricing obviously do stem from demand. So long as the demand is there, the prices will escalate.

Finally, DC and/or Marvel do not have a monopoly. Charlton, Harvey, Whitman and Archie (and Pacific, Eclipse, etc.) all have a market share. Both of you have said as much. Plus, if you spend money anywhere on any back issue by any company, you are directing money away from both of these companies. If you would have bought DAREDEVIL No. Recent but instead bought PEANUT BUTTER COMICS #6 from a dealer/collector/little kid you just hurt their profit motive. If there is room for other purchases on the overall comic book market, great. Competition may actually bring prices down or at least stabilize the market.

[Frankly, if more new comics were as entertaining and well-done as old ones are, fewer back issues would probably be sold. MT]

KIM "HOWARD" JOHNSON, 2007 Jefferson Street, Paducah, KY 42001: I so seldom write an LOC to anyone, I wonder what possessed me to send one along to TCR, but this seems as good a time as any. I'm all settled down here in my new job (news director at WDXR-Radio in Paducah--home of Mel Brooks and Lily Tomlin, not to mention Alben Barkley) and have got just a bit of spare time, so...

It seems like both the comic industry and my life have settled back to take a breath before plunging into a new bit--me with a new job and city, comics with a new price and new formats and distribution... TCR, of course, just seems to keep plugging along, keeping all of the best features, but changing just enough to prevent any stagnation. INFORMATION CENTER is a welcome addition, as I'm sure everyone will agree, and COLLECTING COMICS is interesting, as well as providing a vital service to comic historians...

Cheers to Sam Kujava, for saying what needs to be said about collecting in A COMIC READER, though I suspect he may be a bit too idealistic. Even though I have no plans to sell them right now, I'm damned glad I bought three copies of X-MEN #94 off the stands, "avaricious" or not. I started buying DAREDEVIL when it first came out and have every issue, and it'll take quite a drastic measure for me to quit buying it. Sure, I stuck with it through some lean times, but it was worth it to be around to see Frank Miller grab it and start running with it... Anyway, I can appreciate all of the problems that Sam points out, and am probably in agreement on nearly all of them--it's a rather sad situation that has developed due to collecting. I really wouldn't mind if the value of all comics dropped by 90-percent or more, if it meant I could complete some of my early collections...

I have been able to find a few ways around the monstrously-inflated prices of comics today, though--I've taken to trading away most of my doubles and triples... Most dealers I've found seem to have at least a few older issues I want in less-than-mint condition, and are usually not adverse to trading. I certainly don't care if an issue is mint or not, as long as it's complete and readable--maybe that's one difference between a fan and a collector.

Anyway, I seem to have rambled on far too long as it is, so I guess I'd better end this. The Charles Alverson Python book will apparently be written--at least the contracts have been signed for 1983 or '84 publication. I have yet to do my deal with Pavillion Books, but that will hopefully be hashed out in the next few months. (Charles will be using my Python material for research, and THE COMPLATE MONTY PYTHON will likely be included, in one form or another in a separate section).

[Sam's entreaty actually got two of my longtime friends, both collectors who needed to save some money for living expenses. Both had long-running complete collections which in one case has been stopped entirely (until the financial picture lightens and he pays for a house), while the other had been buying a lot of books he didn't like and is now more selective in his purchases. So, sometimes it may just take the suggestion of action to prompt people to change their habits. MT]

KEVIN HANCER, 5813 York Avenue South, Edina, MN 55410: Thingvall and Moraine are both wrong. The actresses who played Jane in the legit TARZAN movies are: Enid Markey, Karla Schramm, Louise Lorraine, Dorothy Dunbar, Natalie Kingston, Maureen O'Sullivan, Brenda Joyce, Vanessa Brown, Virginia Huston, Dorothy Hart, Joyce McKenzie, Eve Brent, and Bo Derek as the unlucky thirteenth. Although Jacqueline Wells and Eleanor Holm played characters who wound up as Tarzan's mate, neither was called "Jane." Not counting the actors from unauthorized foreign films, like Peng Fei, Ralph Hudson or Steve Hawkes, the legitimate Tarzans were Elmo Lincoln, Gene Pollar, Perce Dempsey Tabler, James Pierce, Frank Merill, Johnny Weissmuller, Buster Crabbe, Herman Brix, Glenn Morris, Lex Barker, Gordon Scott, Denny Miller, Jock Mahoney, Mike Henry, Ron Ely and Miles O'Keeffe for a total of 16.

And on the subject of Tarzan, Jacob sure blew it himself when he said "It's rather funny that none of these knowledgeable film critics remembered... (Tarzan's) whole dialogue consisted of saying "Tarzan, Jane" twice." Late in the 1932 film, Tarzan and Jane share a scene in which Weissmuller had no less than sixteen lines. They were short lines, to be sure, but still were a lot more than O'Keeffe was allowed to say.

Amidst all the publicity interviews, Bo Derek made a number of curious statements. Perhaps the oddest was her revelation that "in the original book, Tarzan's parents were missionaries." You sure have a rare volume, Bo, for in every other know copy of the first book, Tarzan's father is an English Lord with a special commission in the Colonial Office! Okay, it's just a dumb

mistake on her part, but that same "dumb" attitude permeates this entire, lousy remake starring Bo and her Breasts. When I saw it on opening day, the crowd couldn't wait to get out of the theater, not even bothering to watch Bo jiggle in the final scene.

On a further Tarzan note...Warner Bros. has apparently come to terms with Sy Weintraub for the use of the name "Tarzan" in a film title. So, the production that was long called GREYSTOKE will be going forward again.

[Somehow, I was hoping that the Warners film, long-promised and publicized as being true to the Burroughs books, would remain GREYSTOKE, rather than become yet another in a long line of TARZAN AND... movies. I've never seen a Tarzan film which held up as a movie, even for children (and I haven't seen them all, by any means), and it's 'guilt-by-name-association" in my mind. With the GREYSTOKE name, the Tarzan part of the story (as in the Jungle yell and the "Me Tarzan, You Jane" line) wouldn't be so apt to come to mind. MT]

MARK MAGNANO, 2671 Monroe Street, Santa Clara, CA 95051: After reading about and seeing the numerous mistakes and/or discrepancies in the SUPERMAN II movie, I thought I'd add my own comment to the rest: yes, I agree the mistakes and/or discrepancies are numerous, but we must remember that this movie was made for a worldwide audience of which only a small percentage would be knowledgeable about the Superman mythos.

I'm surprised that fans expected the villains to have exactly the same powers as Superman and after I had viewed the film I was glad that the producers let the audience draw their own conclusions regarding several scenes.

Herewith are my own conclusions regarding several of the more controversial scenes:

LOIS LANE SMOKING: Why not? It's the 1980s and Ms. Lane is a liberated woman.

THE VILLAINS SPEAKING ENGLISH: I assumed they were speaking Kryptonese and it was translated for our convenience.

ZOD WALKING ON WATER: He had the power of flight, didn't he? Walking on water is considered flying in my book.

SUPERMAN TAKING A LONG TIME TO CRAWL OUT FROM UNDER THE BUS: When in battle with another Kryptonian the rules concerning Superman's invulnerability are changed. Remember, the evil trio, for the most part, had the same powers as Superman with Zod possibly being more powerful. When hit by the bus, he was probably knocked unconscious for a few minutes. This also explains why he was sent flying by the manhole cover thrown by Ursa.

SUPERMAN AND LOIS LEAVING THE FORTRESS WITHOUT THE VILLAINS: I assumed he flew them to prison before he left with Lois. (Although it wouldn't have hurt to show it.)

As for the villains' force-beams (that were shot from their hands in the fortress) perhaps these were powers they acquired while still on Krypton or in the Phantom Zone. Hopefully, this letter will clear up a few of the disappointments that were harbored by avid Superman fans.

[Lois was shown smoking because Margot Kidder is a smoker. If the film had been made in the '40s, even with the lack of stigmata associated with smoking I think they would have had the sense to prevent what was ostensibly a role model/heroine from having a destructive habit.

The villains spoke English to Americans as well as each other. And they understood them.

I don't care if it's an army of Kryptonian villains beating on Superman with 100 buses, the buses are non-invulnerable material and should not have been able to stun him, though I will accept that they can knock him off balance. The manhole cover is simply unacceptable as a missile of enough strength to hurt him.

You only assume that Superman took the villains to prison because you know Superman wouldn't kill anybody. The only thing people unfamiliar with his comic book code of life can assume from seeing that scene is that the villains fell to their deaths.

The reason for these errors cannot simply be excused as unwillingness to cater to the fan/devotee; they're sloppiness in story telling. Period.

The only possible solution that I can see resolving this mess is that if and when SUPERMAN II along with part one are sold to free-TV, something on the order of THE GODFATHER SAGA is done, with both parts shown over a number of days, outtakes and edited material reinstated and restructured. I know plenty of material was edited from the first part to make it a manageable-length product, chiefly from the Superboy sequences -- including the cameos of Noel Neill and Kirk Alyn as Lois's parents. Of course, this would ride on the same network buying both halves of the story, which has yet to happen. MT]

WALLY PODRAZIK, Chicago, Illinois: At the risk of further extending the SUPERMAN II discussion (to the release of III?), I'd like to add a few thoughts to the power-restoration problem.

First of all, I loved the movie--especially the pacing--and believe it was a wise move not to elaborate on the solution prior to Superman's dramatic reappearance over Metropolis. As I see it, the challenge for fans is to propose a scenario that is consistent with the film as it now stands, adding (at most) perhaps a line or two of dialogue. Here's mine, very much in the tradition of the "unknown tales" that have been part of the Superman legend for the past thirty years or so.

Picking up the glowing green crystal, Kal-El instinctively places it into the crystal machinery--and discovers that despite its charred appearance, the system is still functioning. His mother appears and he explains his problem. She, in turn, explains that the loss of his powers was not really intended to be permanent. In fact, the entire chamber process had been a harsh but necessary hoax (see any issue of SUPERMAN from the 1960s) triggered by his declaration of love for an earth woman. His parents ASSUMED he would fall in love with a mortal (as the ONLY superbeing on the planet, it was practically inevitable), so the temporary loss of powers was set up to test the sincerity of the woman's intentions. It was also to provide their son with a dramatic personal education--demanding that he prove the depth of his love with a supreme sacrifice. (In the process, he also discovered the extent of his global responsibilities and--in true mythic fashion--the pain of being an ordinary human.) He steps back into the chamber and has his powers restored. Then, as a fully-functioning Superman, he realizes that the power-loss chamber provides a way to defeat the Phantom Zone foes even his parents did not consider. He constructs a variation of the system to function outside the chamber, and sets off to Metropolis to lure the villains to his fortress...

As you can see, this script takes care of a number of items: 1) How the vital crystal survived--it was not merely "saved by chance" (Lois dropped it), but served as a vital component of a grand scheme; 2) The differences in the operation of the chamber when Superman lost his powers and the villains lost theirs--there were two different systems at work; 3) Superman's decision (for the moment) not to pursue his love affair with Lois--he had some valuable lessons to ponder.

Now, what would have to be added to the film to cover all this? Just a brief line in the dialogue between Superman and Lois as he flies back to her apartment. (Perhaps: "...and the loss of my powers was only temporary, designed by my parents as a test for the day I'd fall in love.") In fact, because we pick up their conversation in progress, one could argue that the explanation

above (or some other) was given to Lois earlier in the flight -- we just didn't hear it!

Because Richard Lester and company did such a superb job on the film, I'd be more than willing to give them the benefit of the doubt fine-tuning the plots. In the meantime, I'll let you ponder the acceptability of my storyline--as well as possible solutions to other rough spots such as how Clark and Lois acquired the car for the drive from the fortress and the method of hypnosis used in the forgetfulness kiss.

[This storyline is quite plausible to me, though I'm not sure I understand how Jor-El was able to conceive of and construct a device which would remove the powers of a Kryptonian when he had only theorized their existence to begin with. Obviously, since the machine was made on Krypton, no kryptonite could have been involved, yellow or red or otherwise. The only non-physical explantion, hypnosis, might actually be the most logical explanation--Clark only thought he couldn't fly, caused his bruises himself, and willed away his strength. When the crystal, which was actually meant to reactivate Lara's image and explain things after a period of time (which fits with your scenario), was replaced and it was explained to Kal-El, he became immune to the machine's effects when he used it later on the Phantom Zoners. It's been a while since I saw the film, but I think that would all fit.

Carrying this one step further, Superman--having once been super-hypnotized by this advanced science--might now have the ability to do some hypnosis of his own. Whether this took the form of sub-audible suggestions in Lois's mind as they kissed or some other unexplained form I won't hypothesize until I see the movie again.

I wonder if any non-comics fans had any trouble with these points? The film could be enjoyed simply as a spectacle, requiring little thinking, quite obviously--but surely some portion of the several million who went to see it came away confused. MT]

FRANK HAYES, P.O. Box 10860, Chicago, IL 60610: So, Michael, you ask what I think of the new videotape copyright court ruling, eh? Well...

The copyright act is designed to protect the commercial rights of copyright holders, and thus encourage the creation and publication of all sorts of material. That includes copyrighted TV shows and movies.

Now, videotaping what's on TV isn't necessarily against the law--for example, if you tape something that won't otherwise be available, just for you to watch, that falls under the category of "fair use." Even if the material is copyrighted, if it's not on the market and you're not copying it to make a buck you'll usually be within the law. Okay?

But some of it IS on the market. Disney Productions and MCA/Universal sell home versions of movies and TV shows. They sued Sony (and others, including one Betamax owner) for copyright infringement, claiming that their videotape and videodisk market was being eroded--Sony was selling Betamaxes and encouraging people to tape their favorites off the TV, instead of buying what Disney or MCA sold. They asked the court to stop Sony from selling videotape recorders.

It's important to understand that nobody ever seriously expected the court to actually outlaw videotape recorders. The next (and necessary) legal step would outlaw all forms of magnetic storage--sound recording tape, computer disks, practically everything --and that just wouldn't be in anybody's interest. MCA and Disney simply wanted to stop Sony from making money at their expense. The legal principles were pretty clear--there WAS infringement going on, since no one had granted the folks at home any license to copy the TV shows.

Unfortunately, Los Angeles District Court Judge Warren Ferguson aouldn't see any practical way to keep people from breaking the law. Instead, he created a loophole--he said that if it's on free TV and recorded for home-use only, the recording was legal --thus Sony was in the clear.

(It's worth pointing out here that if Judge Ferguson's ruling had been allowed to stand it would have meant the end of network TV as we know it. The entire costs of a show's production would have to be recouped in a single broadcast--which would have meant much cheaper production, many more commercials, and possibly no more free TV of any kind.)

But the appeals court said, in effect, "Sorry, that won't do. Just because a law is difficult to enforce doesn't mean it should be thrown out--it just requires some creative thinking."

The appeals court decided that there WAS copyright infringement going on, and since it couldn't be going on without the active participation of the videocassette-recorder manufacturers, Sony (and, eventually, everyone else who makes VCRs) was liable for damages.

Got that? The point is, Sony was making money by selling VCRs, and encouraging people to buy them so they could break the copyright law. Though not actually the lawbreaker, Sony was sort of a "silent partner"--without Sony, the crime couldn't happen.

The court suggested one possible solution: Sony and other VCR manufacturers could pay royalties to the copyright holders. That way, the costs would eventually be passed on in the form of higher VCR prices paid by the folks actually doing the copying. Since they were indirectly paying royalties, they'd no longer be infringing, the copyright law would be preserved, and the republic would be safe once more.

What's my opinion? I think this is very good news for everyone. It's important to protect copyrights--without them, there's nothing to encourage TV producers (or comic-book publishers or anyone else) to produce first-rate material. Yes, it means VCRs will cost a little more--maybe the tape will too. If you've been stealing apples, you're not going to like the idea of having to buy them instead--but you'll no longer be ripping off the people who obey the law, who had to pay more for THEIR apples because of you.

But it means there'll be more and better video coming our way--and taping will still be far cheaper than buying pre-recorded shows from your local video store.

One final thing: even when you can legally tape shows off the air, you still don't own the rights. You can STILL expect the federal marshals to come around if you sell bootleg copies of copyrighted TV shows, movies, or suchlike.

This is by no means an exhaustive survey of what's involved here--there are textbooks to be written on the subject. But the point is this: if you're taping off the air FOR HOME USE, Sony and the other VCR manufacturers will soon be making an honest citizen of you again.

Generous of them, huh?

[It sure is, especially considering it puts a bunch of us in the position of having unwittingly broken the law. It is vaguely bothersome, if only because some of us felt we were law-abiding citizens.

Two things I must disagree with, however. There was recently a NIGHTLINE program featuring representatives of all sides of this case, and I found the Sony representative to be as ridiculous as the Universal representative, both of whom skirted the facts in their arguments. One of the Universal arguments was like your claim that free TV would be destroyed if unlimited home-taping of broadcast programs was allowed unabated. Baloney. Excepting the three hours of primetime programming on each network, there are virtually no shows created and shown which are ever meant to be seen more than once. All their costs are recouped on that one showing, and this includes soaps, game shows and sports in addition to news and public affairs programming. Out of the 22 hours of weekly prime-time programming each network shows, probably only three or four hours out of that is ever syndicated, meaning other than the rerun of a regular series program, a large percentage of prime-time is one-time-only.

This is all without VCRs. Where do they come in at all?

I collect TV series. In nearly every case, I've watched the rerun of a show I originally taped. Why? Because I didn't tape the show to watch it again in a week, or even six months -- I taped it to preserve it for years. I like the security of knowing that should I wish to see a particular episode of BOB NEWHART or even the full series again I can without having to contend with the lackings of local stations.

However, I'm one of the minority of American viewers who like to watch programs more than once. Look at the summer ratings. Even on shows like DALLAS, the ratings plummet once they're in reruns. So hinging the future of free-tv on the vagaries of the VCR is specious reasoning at best.

And I don't believe for one minute that adding VCR royalties to current video programming will improve the programming quality in any way. It'll make things nicer for the packagers, but that's about it.

I'll pay the royalty, and I guess I'll feel okay about it, but I won't like it. And if anybody comes along and throws their apples in my house, you're darn right I'll eat 'em, after I've checked them for worms. MT]

JOHN A. WILCOX, 40 Hales Court, Westport, CT 06880: I'd like to say a few words on this and that.

First, on the so-called 'rags' like THE COMICS JOURNAL. If everyone hates the damned thing, then why don't they just stop buying it? Speaking for myself, I've never read it in the first place. And all you artists, writers, editors and so forth, if you're tired of getting misquoted or quoted out of context, then just stop agreeing to their interviews, and grant one to one of the best, namely, TCR. I know that YOU'RE out there, John Byrne, so let's hear from you. If no one is available to interview you, I'LL be glad to do it, as I've many a question.

Next, fans...while I DON'T quite think that we're "saints," I DO think that we're basically a hell of a nice lot, friendly, talkative, helpful, and out to ENJOY our hobby. So, no snide or disrespectful comments, Mr. Koehn. If you like your "clientele" so much, don't downgrade them (which WAS one of the contradictory points of THAT letter).

I'm sorry if I sound angry, I don't mean to. It just "sounds" that way.

Now onto TCR #196. Truly a BOFFO issue! Hello, Captain Kentucky! What a fun strip. Michael did a very nice cover (although Doc Savage's hair should be DARKER than his skin!).

But where was Dick Duck?

Nice to see myself (as it were) in INFORMATION CENTER. I'm just bursting with questions for Don, and I hope other fans will respond in kind.

And once again, BOOMER is (was) by Mel Casson only (though Bill Brown may have still gotten credit on Sundays due to old logo stats).

[We don't do interviews for two reasons: 1) lack of time or enthusiasm on our own parts; and 2) lack of interest. The people available to interview (the people generally available to conventions) have nearly all been interviewed not once each, but three or four times each. If we have the opportunity to interview someone who hasn't previously been grilled to death, we will -- but I'm not too interested in twenty-page discussions with guys who've only been in the industry a few years. Which is not to say that you, or anyone else, could not do an interview of someone like John Byrne for us; we just don't actively solicit them. Which is why people who ostensibly hate TCJ go there; they're the ones doing interviews. MT]

KARL WILCOX, 140 Pinckney Street, Chester, SC 29706: I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Mike Tiefenbacher and the rest of the staff for the interesting articles in the November, 1980 issue regarding the humor comics (Harvey, Hanna-Barbera, Popeye and Little Lulu). I only recently managed to locate a copy of it (in Charlotte, NC) but I thoroughly enjoyed it. I would like to see an article about Jay Ward's BULLWINKLE and Bob Clampett's BEANY AND CECIL, if you haven't already done one. (If you have, let me know if back issues are still available.)

I also enjoy the super-heroes and have been reading and collecting comics, of nearly all kinds, for over twenty years. My special interests, though, are TV and movie adaptations and comic strip reprints. So I'm glad that your fanzine gives advance information on ALL new comics being published.

[We have yet to do Jay Ward or Bob Clampett features yet because no one has come forth with any special information or angles on the work of either man, and I am loathe to attempt to tackle either from personal recollection. (I've taped plenty of Ward material, but BEANY & CECIL's but a memory.) Count this as another request for help from any knowledgable writers out there. MT]

BOB HOLUM, 710 View Court, Mount Horeb, WI 53572: I'm starting to feel prophetic lately. I used to have daydreams about what it would be like if DC added a whole bunch of titles, or revived their annuals...and whaddya know, they go ahead and do it! They must really be prospering, or at least overflowing with enthusiastic talent. I sure do hope they become numero uno once more.

To paraphrase him, "Sam Kujava's column continues to entertain." I tend to agree with him so often. It's funny that he and others like him have the most obvious answers to comicdom's problems, yet they are rarely noticed (last month's column, for example). Have you read Gerry Conway's BATMAN? Let me just say I wrote to Dick Giordano and requested a VERY major overhaul and I would be interested to hear Mr. Kujava's opinion about this nightmare.

Enjoyed the cameos in DICK DUCK. I don't suppose you were teachers' "pets" in school, eh?

Also enjoyed the Top 100 list, mainly because the DCs did so much better than usual.

Finally: Burt Reynolds as Batman? There oughta be a law against that.

[To answer your query: nope. Haven't read BATMAN recently. MT]

KATHY GODFREY, Box 87 M.I.T. Branch P.O., Cambridge, MA 02139: As I write this, the third installment of the new comic strip THE MUPPETS has appeared. My reaction as a staunch Muppets fan: Feh. For this, the Boston HERALD-AMERICAN dropped STAR TREK. I'm now going to be reduced to buying the Pittsburgh POST-GAZETTE to pick up the ST strip. (I already buy the Burlington (VT) FREE PRESS just for STAR WARS.) All this complaining brings to mind a suggestion. Would it be possible to set up a small boxed space somewhere in TCR from time to time to list where certain sought-after strips are currently running? As you can see, I have to go pretty far afield to keep up, and I'm sure other strip collectors do as well. (I buy the Toronto STAR to get THE WORLD'S GREATEST SUPERHEROES, for example.) I think that I'm doing as well as anyone in the Boston area can (with access to out-of-town newspapers). I'd be interested in hearing how people in other regions are faring.

(Incidentally, I think Miss Piggy may be paying off the artist on the MUPPETS strip. She looks five years younger and quite a few pounds lighter. And as an amusing bit of trivia, in the Toronto STAR for the first installment, Miss Piggy's "Kissy, kissy, America" was amended to "Kissy, kissy, Canada.")

Sam Kujava's column may cause mass introspection. Although I do read everything I buy, I don't think I enjoy it all as much as I did in the '60s, when a $2.00 allowance didn't go very far, and I had to pick and choose my comics with care. But I'm not sure that a consumer boycott will nudge DC and Marvel into creativity. Look at a comic like WONDER WOMAN, which has been hovering at the brink of oblivion for several years, despite frantic changes

in the book. A severe drop in sales might simply kill the book. It's probably easier to drop a borderline book than to overhaul it. If, as rumored, prices are up to 75¢ by the end of next year, many of the books may fold anyway.

I heartily endorse Mr. Kujava's ideas about retaining humor in the comics. Irony and sarcasm are not the only kinds of humor, but that's mostly what we get these days. Let's hear it for silliness! (Holy inanity, Batman!) Everyone's so damn serious in comics, if not downright grim. Where's the escapist element?

I was greatly impressed by your review of Lenburg's book. I had glanced through it when it first appeared, and noted enough shortcomings to set it aside, but I don't know enough about the field to have made the painstaking perusal you have. It should be noted that no reference book of this type is ever perfect; whatever the field, anyone who cares enough about it to want such a book is likely to be knowledgeable enough to find errors and omissions in it. This is why such works should be sent out for expert review before publication, as textbooks are.

Considering the lack of information available here on Japanese-originated cartoons, some publisher in Japan or the U.S. is missing a bet by not producing a book on Japanese animation for Americans. (Or I'll simply have to learn Japanese, I suppose.) A start would be translating the albums like Roman's and continue from there. For all I know, a reference book might already exist in Japanese. Since many of the albums are now out-of-print (the one for the original ASTRO BOY series, for example, as I found to my dismay), even those fluent in Japanese can't always get access to the information.

You're definitely doing something right with the new articles in TCR. Now my roommate grabs each issue as I get it to read it first.

A few comments on Greg Schienke's letter: I reread my own letter in #194, and I can see that I may not have made myself clear in my discussion of SUPERMAN II. In my comments on the diner scenes, what I meant was since the "mortal" CLARK had asked the other fellow to "step outside," when he went back to beat up the bully after regaining his powers, he was continuing a fight that he (Clark/Superman) had started. This struck me as being completely out of character. The explanation of Ursa's reactions as reflexive seem plausible, though I would have enjoyed seeing the snake defanged rather than French-fried. (Surely the Newmans must have seen examples of that in even a limited perusal of older SUPERMAN comics!)

Incidentally, I've heard a rumor to the effect that DC vetoed a script proposal for SUPERMAN III featuring Supergirl and Brainiac. If this is true, we can only be grateful. Not only would it be impossible to handle the special effects involved with Brainiac's force field without spending a monumental amount of money, but 90% of the audience would be wondering where on Earth (or Krypton) this character Supergirl came from.

I spoke too soon [above] about where I would have to go for the STAR TREK comic strip. The Pittsburgh POST-GAZETTE was also Muppetized, and I'm now buying the Houston CHRONICLE for ST. I think this illustrates my point about the usefulness of an occasional column to list where wanted strips are currently running.

The demise of the Marvel STAR TREK comic comes as no surprise. There is a kind of circular reasoning endemic to adaptations of popular TV shows to comics that goes something like this: First, "Oh it's STAR TREK [or whatever]. It'll sell no matter how slapdash the art/writing is." This is followed by "Oh, our comic version of STAR TREK isn't selling. There must not be a market for it as a comic." The identification of the fallacy is left as an exercise for the reader.

With regard to the page of art on page 39 [a page of YOGO TSUNO from Paulette Carroll's column], it's nice to know that fight dialogue sounds just as silly in French as it does in English.

A final question: Why does Kudzu look like a teen-age Jimmy Carter?

[A better question is: why is KUDZU not funny? Why is THE MUPPETS not funny? Why are BEN SWIFT, BLOOM COUNTY, GOOSEMEYER, WILLY 'N' ETHEL not funny? Why are the syndicates buying these? Why are the newspapers buying these? Even when the new strips are well-drawn (SHOE is a great example) why is there no HUMOR? People have continually bemoaned the lack of any new adventure strips of value; I'm continually amazed as I watch the revolving-door humor strips come and go in our local papers that very few have noticed the dearth of good, original, well-drawn humor strips. C'mon, syndicates, give me something I can be enthusiastic about! MT]

JOHN G. PIERCE, 55 Haldy Avenue, Columbus, OH 43204: I was surprised to see a letter from one Paul Dini, whose name I also spotted on the creditline for one of the SHAZAM! cartoons recently [#196]. I intend to contact him to see if he can help me with some "inside info" about Filmation's treatments of the Marvel Family. Which leads me to say that I enjoyed the first three cartoons shown. The liberties taken are small enough not to prove a problem (though I do wish that the artists would remember that there are five armbands, not four, that the lightning bolts are slanted to the body's left, and that Freddy's crutch remains under the left arm). They've tried perhaps to throw in too many characters from the comics in too short a time, but most of these characters are reasonably faithful to the originals. I can't quite see Unc as a Doc Quartz/Professor Edgewise-type (or Mr. Tawny as his assistant), Mr. Morris isn't kindly enough, and I've always imagined Freddy as having a stronger, less juvenile voice rather than being an Archie Andrews soundalike. But as I said, on the whole, it's not bad. Why the fourth week's episode was only a re-run of the first week's was a bit puzzling. I hope that's not a trend! (Oh, and I tend to suspect that perhaps Station WHIZ was altered to WIZZ because there really is an NBC-affiliate station WHIZ in Zanesville, Ohio.)

ERIC L. SOFER, 1213 Giesse Drive, Mayfield, OH 44124: First, I want to say you're doing a great job! I look forward to TCR every month. But every book can have its boo-boos (TCR #197). Not many that I noticed, though. Some weren't even boo-boos, really. Just picky stuff like: In JLA #200, Perez, not Infantino and Giacoia drew the Adam Strange bit. Another thing was, in mentioning SPACE STARS, Rona didn't know who did the voice of Space Ace. I don't know his name, but I believe he did Zan on SUPERFRIENDS and several Heinz French Fry commercials. (One of you must know who he is -- you did such a great job ripping apart the book about TV cartoons.) Also, when Rona mentioned the DAFFY/SPEEDY SHOW, she mentioned one cartoon. Correct me if I'm wrong, but wasn't it DUCK DODGERS IN THE 23 1/2 CENTURY and not 25th?

And the trivia contest. Boy, I sure am sorry I missed entering it. For the couple boo-boos -- the Human Cannonball was Ryan Chase, mentioned in just about ever other story he was in. Oh, well -- anyone can slip. And, just to be picky, you said every member of every super-group on Earth [were missing]. Just to be annoying, weren't Owlwoman and Jack O'Lantern in the International Heroes in SUPER FRIENDS? Okay, I guess they weren't REALLY a super-team. But, how about the Golden Guardian and the Newsboy Legion? Okay, they're not really a super-team. (Hmmm. Why not one of the Sea Devils, though? Or one of Easy Co.? Just a thought.) And since Wildcat was a member of an Earth-Two super-team, we'll let it go. But what about Captain Comet? Even if he is an ex-member, he was in the Secret Society of Super-Villains. And that blonde with the

blue shirt and the red S -- what is her name? Anyhow, wasn't she in the Legion of Super-Heroes? (Plus, I've heard rumors that she's going to return.)

Hey, was B'Wana Beast in the Inferior Five?

So much for errors. On to criticism. First, where was the Mailboat in #197? Did no one write?

I'm sorry, but I have to complain about ADVENTURE COMICS. I'll admit I was one of the first to predict DIAL "H" FOR HERO would die fast. Probably the only reason it lasted so long was the George Perez covers.

But somebody better tell Ms. Kahn how to work the comics. In my memory, ADVENTURE has housed the Legion, Supergirl, adventure stories, the Spectre, Aquaman, Superboy, the Flash/Wonder Woman/Deadman/Justice Society, Aquaman again, Plastic Man and Starman and Dial "H." The only time it was cancelled was after DIAL "H." Why? Couldn't DC come up with any ideas? Hell, hire me, group. I've got loads of ideas. Like the super-hero team-ups without Superman or Batman, that everyone seems to be wanting. Some of the space missions that kept the full contingency of the Justice League from attending meetings back in the early issues. Some "Untold Tales of the Legion," like the ones that used to be in SUPERBOY and ACTION -- you really can use only two or three heroes. Some stories of the members in the New Teen Titans. Some up-to-date stories of the Justice Society -- no, they'll probably do that when everyone gets tired of the ALL-STAR SQUADRON (yawn!). But how about Power Girl? I thought she got the short shrift. She's a helluva lot more exciting than Supergirl! And so on.

But please, NOT a digest. For gosh sakes, Janette, keep trying! You've had some decent strips -- I thought Deadman was great, and everyone clamored for Starman's return (so it was in DC COMICS PRESENTS -- I'll bet that sucker sold like wildfire!). Give something else a try! That's what ADVENTURE is all about!

Well, I shouldn't complain. At least they're not cancelling it.

And about the cartoons -- just one note, about SPACE STARS. Space Ghost and the Herculoids are better than ever, and contrary to R. Blabbit's belief, I really like the Teen Force! The characters are consistent with Hanna-Barbera's super-hero types and somebody will have to explain to me how they parallel the original Legion. The only one even close is Elektra, though Saturn Girl was never telekinetic, couldn't cast astral images, and COULD thought cast. As far as I've seen Elektra can't do that. But how somebody could equate magnetism and lightning-throwing with turning into a comet and travelling at super-speed, and transforming into molecules -- I dunno. Maybe I'm stupid, but that doesn't seem "parallel" to me. (I suppose Plutem and Glax are R.J. Brande?)

And lastly, the condition of comics today. I beseech my fellow fans: how can we let this go on? While DC is gaining some slight quality, Marvel is just about gone to pot. Friends, let's face it -- Marvel's art is becoming slop. If someone were to ask me to name five well-drawn Marvel books, I'd probably come up one or two shy (in my opinion: DAREDEVIL, IRON MAN and MOON KNIGHT are really good). I'll also reserve comment on the new MARVEL FANFARE and on the FANTASTIC FOUR -- it's improving. Also, I'll admit that I don't read every book, so I may miss one or two. But TOO MUCH looks rushed, and it seems that no one cares about their work anymore -- very little professional pride. And I won't mention most of the dull stories.

Why are we putting up with this? Let's write! Let the editors know! Even to a fanzine -- I'll bet both Stan and Jenette have been known to read TCR. But let's say something.

[Not too many errors, eh? Ah yes, the cartoon article was again riddled with errors caught after the issue was printed, not the least of which was the "parallel" Legionnaires of the Teen Force. Let us put that one down to a mis-transcribing of the original article, rewritten while typing here (it was not meant to imply that the characters were direct "steals" of the Legion or anything like that; just the types and power assignments were similar). The correct title for the cartoon was DUCK DOGERS IN THE RETURN OF THE 24 1/2 CENTURY. And, for perhaps the zenth (and final) time, I misspelled Hans Conried's last name. (I have no excuse; I recently viewed a FRACTURED FLICKERS episode in which he clearly recounted the number of times Conried was misspelled.)

The international heroes of SUPER FRIENDS never met each other as a group, so (until the upcoming Glocal Guardians story in DC COMICS PRESENTS) they're unaffiliated characters. The Guardian was never a member of the Newsboy Legion (not being a newsboy), and this is a different Wildcat. Captain Comet's membership in the SSOSV was not only a subterfuge, it wasn't a group of super-heroes. The Sea Devils IS among the missing groups. Easy is disbanded. And the Legion's in the future, so even if you counted Supergirl as a member, it wouldn't mean anything to this particular plot. Okay? MT]

RUSS GONDER, 306 West Vine, Champaign, IL 61820: Re: TCR #197 Media Review by Rona Blabbit.

Articles on the art of animation are few and far between. I would buy the fanzine for the article alone without checking the rest of the issue. Five pages of opinions and information I found interesting except for one flaw.

"I'll begin by saying that I've been unable to watch either THE TROLLKINS or THE SMURFS through an entire episode. The little I've seen was not impressive in dialogue or art, and in the case of the former, I'm more than a little offended by anything described (in the commercials) as 'foot-jerkin' funny and knee-slappin' weird.' That sounds too much like an epileptic fit."...

I'm MORE than a little offended by that remark. We do NOT have FITS! They are called SEIZURES. A square peg in a square hole is a perfect fit. Not a person who has a nervous disorder! The phrase is considered an insult to us. We forgive the uniformed and avoid the ignorant who call us freaks. An "epileptic" can be absolutely anyone! A senator, teacher, student, basketball-player, grandmother, or your best friend! You can't identify them by their appearance.

To halt the lecture, I'd like to thank you for the "animation information." Could you please find and print illos of JEANNIE, MY FAVORITE MARTIANS, BRADY KIDS, GILLIGAN'S ISLAND and THE LONE RANGER (the first one)? Maybe you know of a book I might be interested in that is available soon?

[First, allow me to apologize to anyone who was offended by that slip; I had no idea I was using offensive language (I couldn't remember the word "seizure," unfortunately) and I won't do it again. Okay?

The cartoons in question aren't likely to come up for discussion in these pages, as all are long-gone and (excepting LONE RANGER) of little interest to me. But our own Jim Korkis is currently readying a TV-animation volume for a publisher, and with any luck at all some of the series mentioned will be represented by illustrations. (Currently available is the only other source of TV cartoon information, the ENCYCLOPEDIA OF ANIMATED CARTOON SERIES by Jeff Lenburg. Although it contains errors of both fact and omission, it may be of use to you, and the Publishers Central Bureau -- a mail order book seller -- currently is selling it for $12.98, which is half the price it was being sold at when it came out. They also have the fine animation book OF MICE AND MAGIC by Leonard Maltin in hardcover for $8.98, which I recommend heartily, even though it dismisses TV animation in its final chapter quite casually. PCB's address is Department 126, 1 Champion Avenue, Avenel, NJ 07001. MT]

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Archie News

PEP #383, out next month, will introduce a new continuing character in the person of "Marvelous Maureen," a young girl who travels in her starship, the "Gypsy Moth," in a series of science-fantasy/science-fiction adventures. Her crew includes Mortimer, a depressed, dog-eared alien, and the Silver Beetle, a tone-deaf musical robot. "Marvelous Maureen" is the comic-book debut of Lori Walls, who writes and illustrates the stories.

Coming Comics

ARCHIE'S GIRLS, BETTY AND VERONICA No. 315, March. [12/22]

ARCHIE'S PALS 'N' GALS No. 157, March. [12/22]

ARCHIE No. 314, March. [12/29]

ARCHIE'S JOKEBOOK No. 284, March. [12/29]

LAUGH COMICS DIGEST MAGAZINE No. 39, March. [12/29]

JUGHEAD WITH ARCHIE COMICS DIGEST MAGAZINE No. 20, March. [1/5]

LIFE WITH ARCHIE No. 230, March. [1/5]

BETTY AND ME No. 127, March. [1/12]

JUGHEAD WITH ARCHIE COMICS DIGEST MAGAZINE No. 49, March. [1/12]

MAD HOUSE COMICS No. 127, March. [1/12]

A Comic Reader

By Sam Kujava

'Tis the season to be jolly. At least, I've certainly been in the spirit, having enjoyed more of what I've been reading lately. Such as...

AVENGERS #217 -- If you can forget the fact that Hank Pym is one of Marvel's oldest heroes, and that this kind of character change SHOULD have been built up over a longer period of time (and would have, when Marvel was MARVEL) and ignore the unsettling sensation that writer Jim Shooter seems to convey a thinly-veiled callousness toward comic-book characters and fans of these pen-and-ink heroes, then it becomes apparent that this title is rather well-done, both in the art and script departments. My only strong objection is having the fallen star Yellowjacket, faced with capture by his former friends, resort to whining like a baby. This would all be a little easier to take if Pym suffered his misfortunes in stony, stoic silence. Okay, so he's a failure, a criminal, a wife-beater...but a WIMP?

WORLD'S FINEST #276 -- The GREEN ARROW and ZATANNA strips in this book are enjoyable, with nice art by two artists with dissimilar styles. But how, I wonder, could a single colorist, Tom Zuiko, do such a fine job on the first strip, and let the latter's hues slide into the consistency of mud?

UNKNOWN SOLDIER #260 -- With the title character, Enemy Ace, and an excellent historical war story by Warner and Estrada, this book has something for all tastes. Kudos to editor Mike Barr, who believes in VARIETY instead of rubber-stamp sameness! And look at the features slated to make a return appearance in these pages... BALLOON BUSTER! SUICIDE SQUAD! TOMAHAWK! And scripted by the original writers, rather than suffer through some embarrassing stillborn abomination like the unlamented NEW DOOM PATROL. Thanks, Mike Barr, for appreciating writers like Kanigher and Haney, and the great strips of DC's glory years. Too bad other editors and writers seem ashamed of what has gone before, and would pretentiously rather re-write than...refurbish.

MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE #85 -- A real surprise finish to the Giant-Man saga, courtesy of Spider-Woman! The whole climax was so old-fashioned and corny that it WORKED! But can writer Tom DeFalco also be the editor Tom DeFalco responsible for the stomach-turning MARVEL TEAM-UP #114? There is simply no excuse to let J.M. DeMatteis turn the formerly good-guy FALCON into an obnoxious, slogan-sputtering racist. What's worse, bad writing or non-existent editing?

DC COMICS PRESENTS #43 -- I was all prepared not to like this but instead got a big kick out of it! Paul Levitz carefully balanced his saga with doses of suspense, humor and all-out action. Curt Swan was in usual fine form. And inker Dave Hunt...well, even his heavy-handed embellishing couldn't take away my enjoyment. (Will DC EVER find an inker that can

do justice to Swan's pencils?) For a title that has a format that promotes variance in quality -- any issue is only as good as whoever is writing and drawing it -- DC COMICS PRESENTS hits the bullseye more often than not.

WEIRD WAR TALES #109 -- Creature Commandos...Sure, it was a stupid concept! But in the professional hands of new writer Bob Kanigher and new artist Dan Spiegle, it finally works! Witness artist Spiegle's handling of the bomber sequence on pages 6 and 7. Witness a long under-rated master storyteller at work. And Kanigher is... Kanigher.

AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #226 -- Roger Stern is writing this one now, and old creaky Spidey is just about as interesting to look forward as it ever was. Somehow, though, the effect is lessened by the bad drawing and careless inking. I always thought the big guns were supposed to work on the big books. Remember the long stints on this venerable title by Ditko, Romita Sr. and Gil Kane? Junior has a lot to learn.

CAPTAIN AMERICA #267 -- You don't even have to remember that far back to when this book was worthwhile... Stern and Byrne, ah yasss. Will somebody please tell artist Mike Zeck that his rendition of Cap is a REAL HOWLER! That elephantine jawbone and bloated barrel-chest go 'way past comic-book exaggeration in the normal sense. IT'S NOTICEABLE TO DISTRACTION. One shouldn't have to stop reading the story to laugh at the anatomical distortions of the main character! But the art is welcome compared to the now-predictable plodding plotting of DeMatteis. If he can't work demons and devils and possession into the story, you can be sure he'll expose us to one of his cardboard hippies spouting radical ideologies in a manner that would make a preacher blush. These peace-and-love Haight-Ashbury rejects offend because they have no semblance of reality. They do not speak, they pontificate. They do not eat and breathe, they suffer on the inside and whine on the outside. And J.M., who I believe possesses talent as a writer, trots his demons and crybabies out issue after issue of whatever title he scripts. Surely he cannot be this limited? I hope not. I'm waiting.

JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA #200 -- The big anniversary issue of what is probably my favorite DC title. (At least, it was my favorite four or five years ago. Has Conway been writing THAT LONG?) The segments by art greats Jim Aparo, Carmine Infantino, Dick Giordano, Brian Bolland, Gil Kane and Joe Kubert were savored, and much too short. The Perez and Broderick chapters, by comparison, were drawn to excess, that's very evident. When will these young "noodle" artists learn that LESS is MORE! You can't hide what you don't know under a multitude of lines. The epic story by Gerry Conway was workmanlike and adequate, and from me, THAT'S PRAISE!

LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES #284 -- They had DITKO and they took BRODERICK?

ADVENTURE COMICS #490 -- This issue featuring DIAL "H" FOR HERO was the best yet. I actually sat down and reread the thing, so entertained was I, and boy, it's been a WHILE since I gave myself the time for that! Really a well-produced reminder of what DC can be, and... what? They're cancelling ADVENTURE? Figures... So what if it will be a backup strip in SUPERBOY? The problem in the strip's beginning was that it needed a book-length space to really shine! Oh well...

ALL-STAR SQUADRON #6 -- WELCOME, Adrian Gonzales! Don't go away, Jerry Ordway!

GHOST RIDER #66 -- Imagine, you've got this visually-striking character that jumps out at the average kid on the newsstand. Guaranteed to make a profit, no matter what garbage is on the inside. Oh, you've SEEN this book in the last 2 1/2 years!

WONDER WOMAN #289 -- Aw, poor Huntress! She didn't get to take off her clothes for the requisite shower scene this time, so all of the sexually-starved pre-adolescents had to settle for a provocative shot of her ripped-open blouse! Oh, and for the older bondage freaks, she was bound in chains and prodded with some kind of electrical sword! Isn't it nice to know that Levitz and Staton respect and write/draw UP to their audience, and don't PANDER to the perverted tastes of the sick of mind? Sarcasm aside, it really does AMAZE me that these "gentlemen" have been given, somehow, the job of writing and drawing comics that are, largely, read by little children! While I loathe Falwell and his ilk, this kind of crap just feeds the fires of hate in people that promote censorship. I can see how a casual reader, not conversant with what's trendy and collectible as laid down in the Bible According to Overstreet, would be put off by this stuff. I'll leave the part about how it's degrading to women to Cat Yronwode; she works up a lather on the subject much better than I. The bottom line is, I'd be a pretty poor parent if I let my five-year-old son Jake waste his time on such creative sewage. The most utterly laughable irony is that this HUNTRESS strip appears in WONDER WOMAN, which is being pushed by the DC corporation as some long-lived paean to womanhood! Would that it were so...

ARAK #7 -- I'm starting to warm up to this book, flaws and warts included. I wonder what the Christians will say about Roy's addition and fiction, history and fable. The undeniable fact that sturdy pro Roy Thomas, who started writing comics about the time I started buying them, is putting all of his considerable efforts into making his books a whopping good read, is perhaps the NICEST CHRISTMAS PRESENT this weary Comic Reader has to feel jolly about.

To all the people in the industry, and to the fans who support the comics, to those of us who still love comics and believe in good solid storytelling and simple, bold graphics and REAL HEROES, I extend my warmest, snow-on-Christmas-Eve and sleigh-bell Season's Greetings!

Comic Strip Circus

By Jacob Moraine

Congratulations must be extended to N.Y. Times Special Features for a big display of sheer guts. The post-STAR WARS revival of the adventure strip is waning, with many of the papers that added adventure strips that were tied-in in some way to hit movies, TV shows, etc. dropping those strips and replacing them with new gag strips. Yet Special Features not only has launched an announced new adventure strip, but the strip is a western, a genre that is not at this moment enjoying popularity in any medium except the novel. And the strip is connected to an unsuccessful movie that was the subject of almost general undeserved critical trouncing. Yes, THE LONE RANGER returned to newspapers on September 13, 1981. The writer of the strip is indeed Cary Bates of SUPERMAN comics fame, as was stated when the strip was first announced. Bates already was the writer of the syndicate's BUCK ROGERS IN THE 25TH CENTURY. The artist of the strip is Russ Heath, who replaced the earlier-announced Gil Kane, who himself replaced the still earlier-announced Russ Heath, who had left the project in its early unsure stage to take the more secure position of Stan Lynde's assistant on LATIGO. Heath left that job and took the LONE RANGER job when Kane dropped out.

Bates writes a good suspenseful story, full of action. He writes fine dialogue, terse and informative as today's story strip dialogue must be. His years of writing unfilmed screenplays (though some of his MOONRAKER screenplay did find its way to the screen in THE SPY WHO LOVED ME) seem to have given him a good ear, for his western dialogue doesn't have the awful overdone and false-sounding drawl full of anachronisms that most comic book western dialogue has had for the past

ten years. Bates also throws in a nicely done romantic subplot featuring the Ranger's love interest from THE LEGEND OF THE LONE RANGER movie. A totally professional job.

Russ Heath does some beautiful artwork for the strip. Detailed panoramic scenes so well laid out that you can see the intent of the picture even in the small, sometimes tiny, size that it is reduced to in the papers. And Heath's style gives a feel for the west that very few of today's cartoonists can convey. Heath loves things western, since his father had been a cowboy and deputy marshal. That's why Heath wanted to draw the proposed JONAH HEX newspaper strip of some years ago, for which he did work up some samples for DC, and that's why he's happy to be doing THE LONE RANGER.

The most interesting thing about THE LONE RANGER is that it actually has been picked up by more papers than I ever expected to take the strip. Quality has often no correlation with the success or failure of a strip in the recent past, but apparently a number of papers have decided to gamble on quality.

TORN BY EMOTION, THE LONE RANGER TURNS AWAY FROM THE BEAUTIFUL WOMAN A YOUNG JOHN REID LOVED YEARS AGO!
IT THAT LOOK ON HER FACE—NOW SHE KNOWS
JOHN REID DID NOT DIE WITH THE OTHER TEXAS RANGERS! HE STILL LIVES BEHIND THIS MASK!

Two sample strips to show the romantic complications abounding in the November 6th strip above, and the very very concise storytelling and variety of artistic viewpoints in the November 18th strip below it. I hope THE LONE RANGER rides again for a long time to come.

There are a number of deaths to report, unfortunately.

Bill Kavanagh, writer of BRINGING UP FATHER since 1954, died of a heart attack this past August 26th at the age of 75. Kavanagh took over the job of writing the misadventures of Jiggs and Maggie when the strip's creator George McManus died. Kavanagh had held a staff position at King Features since 1934 when he joined the company as an assistant to the comics editor. In his writing of the strip, Kavanagh stayed away from the type of gags that McManus had used with the family's wealth being the basis of the humor. Kavanagh felt that having more BLONDIE-like middle-class jokes would enhance the readers' identification with the characters. He added a number of new running characters to the strip, notably Maggie's nephew Groover. Kavanagh worked so far ahead that King Features still has months of BRINGING UP FATHER material for Frank Fletcher to draw for the Sunday strip and for Frank Johnson to draw for the daily strip.

Fred Fox died the day after Kavanagh, August 27th, at the age of 78. A comedy writer for comedians in nightclubs, as well as a writer for radio (where he wrote for Groucho Marx and Judy Canova, etc.) TV, and movies (a recent movie carried his credit line), he was the acknowledged ghost-writer for the long-running strip FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS. He also was the bylined final writer on the old ELLA CINDERS strip.

HELLO? I'D LIKE TO SPEAK TO THE PRESIDENT, PLEASE.
WHOM SHALL I SAY IS CALLING?
VERBENA NASH
HE'S IN A MEETING (CLICK)
MAYBE I SHOULD CHANGE MY NAME TO SOMETHING MORE CATCHY... LIKE, UH...
JANE PAULEY?

Actress Enid Markey died November 15th. Though she had a long career encompassing films (she co-starred with cowboy greats William S. Hart and Tom Mix among others), stage (she appeared in the original MORNING'S AT SEVEN in 1939), radio (she was a regular on WOMAN OF COURAGE), TV (she was a co-star of BRINGING UP BUDDY), her greatest claim to fame remains being the original film Jane in the 1918 TARZAN OF THE APES. Of course you know that film was tremendously successful, becoming one of the first half-dozen films to make over one million dollars, and spawned a sequel out that same year, THE ROMANCE OF TARZAN, also co-starring Elmo Lincoln and Miss Markey. That one role of Jane Porter assured Enid Markey of immortality.

Two new gag strips offer something a little different in their approaches.

VERBENA by Perry Howze (a woman despite her name) began June 1st, 1981. The title character is a young woman fresh out of college who goes to New York to make it big. The cartoonist is basically self-taught and has a style unlike anything seen elsewhere in strips. She founded a greeting card company for which she did the drawings while trying to break into strips. The strip, while gag-a-day, tells the continuing story of Verbena's trials and tribulations while trying to emulate Howze's childhood heroine Brenda Starr. The June 15th strip lets you see her unusual style.

LE GRAND CHEF PIERRE by Brian Fray, which began September 21, 1981, also has a somewhat different drawing style, though not as radically different as Howze's. Fray, a commercial artist who states he got into cartooning for the money, created Chef Pierre for a diploma designed for cooking school. The diploma became a hit poster, prompting Fray to use the chef in a

variety of merchandise such as aprons and calendars before starting a comic strip. The Canadian cartoonist went to the Toronto Star Syndicate, which partnered with the Chicago Tribune-N.Y. News Syndicate to sell it worldwide. The most unusual aspect of the strip, however, is that PIERRE never speaks, as you can see from the October 12th strip.

Incidentally, from January 1, 1982 on, the Chicago Tribune-N.Y. News Syndicate will be known as the Tribune Company Syndicate, Inc. Syndicate president Robert S. Reed assured that this does not reflect on the Tribune's unhappiness with the New York NEWS which has long been losing money, but merely an attempt to make the syndicate indistinguishable from the company's other divisions, such as broadcasting, etc.

Did you know that Frank Bolle ghosted TARZAN for two Sundays while Mike Grell recovered from an eye injury?

Books

By Mark Sabljak

No fancy lead-in to this review, just a little bit about a lot of things.

KIDS' STUFF -- You'll only find MICHAEL HAGUE'S FAVORITE HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN FAIRY TALES in the children's section of book stores but it's worth the search for anyone who enjoys fantasy paintings at their best. This 162-page, $14.95 book from Holt, Rinehart and Winston features 26 full-color plates from the artist who produced THE WIND AND THE WILLOWS, a masterpiece. Hague has chosen nine of Andersen's tales including "The Snow Queen," "Thumbelina," "The Emperor's New Clothes" and "The Ugly Duckling" -- and accompanied them with the kind of art that children won't begin to appreciate until they grow as wizened as us. Hague's treatment is reminiscent of Rackham in his handling of minute figures, such as elves and fairies, and his selection of subject material from the tales is challenging in its scope. At the risk of sounding like the president of Hague's fan club, I would say that of all the 1982 calendars I've paged through in stores, THE WIND AND THE WILLOWS selection at $6.95, with illustrations from the hardcover book, may be one of the best.

BLONDIE'S BEST -- Another sure winner this fall is BLONDIE AND DAGWOOD'S AMERICA, a 144-page large-sized paperback at $10.35 from Harper and Rowe. This book, by Dean Young -- son of Blondie-creator Chic Young and Rick Marschall, takes us through the Blondie phenomenon, from the story behind its creation through its evolution. Besides full black and white and color strips, the book also includes a bibliography, including all of the Blondie movies, Blondie Big Little Books from Whitman, Blondie comic books, and radio and television shows. The captions throughout the book will add an insight to one of America's most popular cartoon strips -- and one of the most imitated.

GOING TO CHURCH -- I've often browsed through David Macauley's books. He's the artist whose delicate and detailed line-drawings have dissected architectural masterpieces such as castles and cathedrals. Now I can finally afford one as CATHEDRAL has been published in an 80-page paperback by Houghton-Mifflin for $5.95. Macaulay takes us step-by-step through the construction of an imaginary 13th century cathedral. And while you may believe the last thing you'd be interested in is the building of a church, the book is fascinating -- if for no other reason than Macaulay's intricate illustrations. Search this book out and give it a look.

RECEIVED -- From Ace, another trade paperback selection from the Heathcliff files, this time HEATHCLIFF FEAST, with about 200 panels from the feline goof from the years 1973-75. It runs $4.95. From Ace Tempo a nicely illustrated regular-sized paperback of A CHRISTMAS CAROL by Dickens. It's $2.25. From St. Martin's Press, YET ANOTHER CAT BOOK, another trade paperback of gag panels about felines, for $4.95. From Dembner Books, a diverting collection of panel gags from Jeff Leedy entitled THE CHECK IS IN THE MAIL. It's a book of "darts, pre-sharpened and aimed for throwing pleasure," according to the introductory note scribbled on the back cover by Kliban. At $4.95, it's also one of the better of the lot of cartoon collections.

BEST OF THE BEST -- Among the DAW books I've received of late, THE YEAR'S BEST FANTASY STORIES: 7, edited by Arthur Saha, caught my eye. Maybe it's the Elric cover by Michael Whelan, but turning inside, I wasn't disappointed. For starters, there's a who's who of authors -- including Roger Zelazny, Orson Scott Card, Tanith Lee and Gene Wolfe, with stories about St. George and one of his intended dragon "victims," Card's "The Princess and the Bear," and Wolfe's quick-read "Kevin Malone."

AHEAD IN TIME -- Timescape will publish four paperback Star Trek novels in 1982. The two titled books will be written by Sondra Marshak and Myrna Culbreath and by Lee Correy. Much sooner, Ace will publish an interesting-sounding paperback in December, NASHVILLE WITH A BULLET, by Barry Sadler of Casca fame and Billy Arr, chronicling an adventure tale set in Music City, U.S.A. Also keep your your eyes peeled for a $6.95 trade paperback from Ace, "Madwand," the second in the Roger Zelazny series of 'Changeling." The book, which is also available in a limited, collector edition from Fantasia Press, continues the story of Pol Detson, who as a powerful sorcerer, must survive arduous training and a fantastic initiation into the rites of sorcery. The book is illustrated by Judy King Rientes.

GONE BERSERK -- While some publishers cut back on their science-fiction selections, Pinnacle has added some good-looking paperbacks with their line of TOR science-fiction books -- JIM BAEN PRESENTS. The latest is one of the most attractive -- THE BERSERKER WARS, a first edition collection of Fred Saberhagen's popular series, with short stories from 1967-79. I have always been fascinated by the series, which features robotic, asteroid-sized killers, and this 395-page paperback for $2.95 provides a nice selection. Also new from Tor is Harry Harrison's 1967 release PLANET OF THE DAMNED for $2.50.

WHAT IS THIS BUSINESS COMING TO? -- According to the New York Times Service, you're likely to see fewer paperback books tied in to movies. The business of tie-ins, as they're called, started about fifteen years ago, and among the early successes was 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY. But the Times points out that the big rush to turn every movie into a paperback novel really didn't begin until 1976 when THE OMEN sold one million copies. Soon, there were the bidding wars for rights to produce novels from movies that usually only occur when hard cover bestsellers are being sold. But it took only a few disasters -- like the $400,000 paid for Sylvester Stallone failure F.I.S.T. -- to persuade publishers that not every movie does a novel make. That doesn't mean that you won't be seeing fantasy and science-fiction movies turned into novels. In fact, one spokesman for the industry says that the only movies publishers are interested in these days are horror and fantasy films. An example is DRAGONSLAYER, which didn't slay them at the box office, but is reportedly doing well in print. One of the biggest names in tie-ins is George Lucas, who reportedly was paid $1 million for his EMPIRE STRIKES BACK package, and whose RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK is nearing a million copies in print.

AVON CALLING -- I recognized a familiar title in a recent spate of Avon mystery paperback titles. I reviewed DAGGERMAN by Richard H. Francis when it came out in hardcover a few years back, and as I remember, I gave it a not-too-bad rating.

TCR Top 100 Comic Books

This mo.	Last mo.	Title, Number Publisher, Special Features, Format, Price if not 50c/60c	No. sold
1	1	THE UNCANNY X-MEN No. 151 Marvel	4611
2	6	FANTASTIC FOUR No. 236 Marvel	3321
3	8	RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK No. 3 Marvel-Lucasfilm; last issue	3041
4	7	THE NEW TEEN TITANS No. 13 DC	2887
5	4	DRAGONSLAYER No. 2 Marvel-Paramount/Disney, final issue	2715
6	9	THE AVENGERS No. 213 Marvel	2678
7	15	DAREDEVIL No. 176 Marvel	2655
8	14	IRON MAN No. 152 Marvel	2570
9	12	MOON KNIGHT No. 13 Marvel	2520
10	5	FOR YOUR EYES ONLY No. 2 Marvel-UA, final issue	2427
11.	21	THE MICRONAUTS No. 35 Marvel-Mego; 48 pages; 75c	2306
12	19	ROM No. 24 Marvel-Parker Brothers, with Nova	2305
13	18	KA-ZAR THE SAVAGE No. 8 Marvel	2279
14	20	THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN No. 272 Marvel	2257
15	23	ALL-STAR SQUADRON No. 3 DC	2174
16	10	DAZZLER No. 9 Marvel	2065
17	17	ARAK/SON OF THUNDER No. 3 DC	2015
18	27	STAR WARS No. 33 Marvel-Lucasfilm	1980
19	25	PETER PARKER, THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN No. 60 Marvel, 48 pages; 75c	1978
20	--	THOR ANNUAL No. 9 Marvel, 48 pages, 75c	1972
21	24	THE KRYPTON CHRONICLES No. 3 DC, final issue	1859
22	13	THE DEFENDERS No. 10 Marvel, guest-stars the Silver Surfer	1849
23	34	MARVEL TEAM-UP No. 111 Marvel; Spider-Man, Devil Slayer and the Defenders	1827
24	27*	EPIC ILLUSTRATED No. 8 Marvel, color magazine, $2.00	1798
25	33	THOR No. 313 Marvel	1781
26	40	POWER MAN AND IRON FIST No. 75 Marvel, 48 pages, 75c	1767
27	29	CONAN THE BARBARIAN No. 128 Marvel-Robert E. Howard	1762
28	37	MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE No. 81 Marvel, Thing and Sub-Mariner	1744
29	38	CAPTAIN AMERICA No. 263 Marvel	1726
30	36	JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA No. 196 DC	1650
31	46	WARLORD No. 51 DC	1604
32	41	THE INCREDIBLE HULK No. 265 Marvel; with the Rangers	1541
33	42	THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES No. 281 DC	1397
34	43	THE SAVAGE SHE-HULK No. 22 Marvel	1388
35		DENNIS THE MENACE No. 1 Marvel-Field Enterprises	1370
36	45	MASTER OF KUNG FU No. 106 Marvel	1300
37	48	DC COMICS PRESENTS No. 39 DC, Superman and Frankie Man	1282
38	52	SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN No. 69 Marvel-R.E. Howard; b&w magazine, $ .25	1231
39	47	GREEN LANTERN No. 146 DC	1205
40	49	BATMAN No. 341 DC	1176
41	50	DETECTIVE COMICS No. 508 DC	1141
42	5	GHOST RIDER No. 62 Marvel	1122
43	53	THE BRAVE AND THE BOLD No. 180 DC, Batman and the Spectre	1068
44	58	ACTION COMICS No. 525 DC	1023
45	54	THE FLASH No. 303 DC	990
46	56	SUPERMAN No. 365 DC	987
47	55	THE NEW ADVENTURES OF SUPERBOY No. 23 DC	983
48	57	WONDER WOMAN No. 285 DC	940
49	59	ADVENTURE COMICS PRESENTS DIAL 'H' FOR HERO No. 487 DC	909
50	67	THE BEST OF DC No. 18 DC; digest, Teen Titans, 95c	853

This mo.	Last mo.	Title, Number Publisher, Special Features, Format, Price if not 50c/60c	No. sold
51	60	HEAVY METAL No. 54 [V5#6] HM, color magazine, $2.00	827
52	61	WORLD'S FINEST COMICS No. 273 DC; 48 pages, $1.00	609
53	62	THE SUPERMAN FAMILY No. 212 DC, 48 pages, $1.00	596
54	63	MARVEL SUPER ACTION No. 37 Marvel, Avengers reprints	487
55	65	MARVEL TALES STARRING SPIDER-MAN No. 133 Marvel, Spider-Man reprints	477
56	64	JONAH HEX No. 54 DC	376
57	69	DC SPECIAL BLUE RIBBON DIGEST No. 15 DC, digest, origins of villains; 95c	361
58	63*	CHARLTON BULLSEYE No. 4 Charlton, Vanguards by Larry Houston	310
59	65*	THE BOOK No. 11 Warren; black & white magazine, $2.00	303
60	70	1994 No. 21 Warren, black & white magazine, $2.00	293
61	68	MARVEL SUPER-HEROES No. 103 Marvel, Hulk reprints	293
62	78	VAMPIRELLA No. 100 Warren; black & white magazine, $2.25	261
63	75	THE UNEXPECTED No. 216 DC	196
64	74*	SPIDEY SUPER STORIES No. 55 Marvel-CTW	195
65	71	SGT. ROCK No. 358 DC	194
66	74	UNKNOWN SOLDIER No. 257 DC	194
67	73	HOUSE OF MYSTERY No. 298 DC	183
68	79	EERIE No. 125 Warren; black & white magazine; $2.00	177
69	76	GHOSTS No. 106 DC	7
70	80	SECRETS OF HAUNTED HOUSE No. 42 DC	167
71	66	WEIRD WAR TALES No. 105 DC	158
72	8	CREEPY No. 132 Warren, black & white magazine, $2.00	148
73	77	G. I. COMBAT No. 235 DC, 48 pages, $1.00	148
74	82	CRAZY MAGAZINE No. 79 Marvel, black & white magazine, 90c	100
75	--	WARREN PRESENTS No. 13 Warren, b&w Sword and Sorcery reprints $2.00	95
76	75*	BUCK ROGERS No. 13 Whitman-R.C. Dille	78
77	78*	UNCLE SCROOGE No. 89 Whitman-Disney	74
78	70*	FLASH GORDON No. 24 Whitman-King Features	55
79	80*	Walt Disney's COMICS AND STORIES No. 491 Whitman-Disney	50
80	76*	DONALD DUCK No. 232 Whitman-Disney	50
81	--	DOCTOR SOLAR No. 29 Whitman	40
82	--	SPACE FAMILY ROBINSON No. 57 Whitman	36
83	79*	THE FOX AND THE HOUND No. 3 Whitman-Disney	34
84	--	TUROK, SON OF STONE No. 127 Whitman	29
85	--	GRIMM'S GHOST STORIES No. 56 Whitman	25
86	93	RICH-E RICH No. 163 Harvey	25
87	90	RICHIE RICH DIGEST STORIES No. 12 Harvey; digest, 95c	25
88	87*	RICHIE RICH AND CADBURY, THE PERFECT BUTLER No. 20 Harvey	24
89	85*	RICHIE RICH DIGEST WINNERS No. 11 Harvey, digest, 95c	24
90	88*	RICHIE RICH FORTUNES No. 59 Harvey	24
91	86*	RICHIE RICH INVENTIONS No. 21 Harvey	24
92	84*	RICHIE RICH ZILLIONS No. 29 Harvey	24
93	--	RICHIE RICH MILLION DOLLAR DIGEST No. 5 Harvey, digest; 95c	23
94	83*	RICHIE RICH PROFITS No. 43 Harvey	22
95	99*	SAD SACK No. 283 Harvey	22
96	88*	HOT STUFF No. 163 Harvey	21
97	91*	RICHIE RICH AND CASPER No. 41 Harvey	21
98	81*	RICHIE RICH AND JACKIE JOKERS No. 45 Harvey	21
99	92*	RICHIE RICH BILLIONS No. 43 Harvey	20
100	94*	RICHIE RICH CASH No. 43 Harvey; * titles not on last month's survey!	19

PARTICIPATING SHOPS: Aardvarks, Albinos and Aliens Comics, Westport, NY; Alpha-Omega Comic and Trading Card Co., Fresno, CA; B&D Buyer Service, Moneta, VA; Benders, Hampton, VA; Bill and Bob's Comic Store, Brooklyn, NY; Bob's Comics, Lawndale, CA; Bookie Parlay, Dayton, OH; The Book Nook, Chamoa gn., IL; The Collector's Corner, Grand Rapids, MI; Comic Carnival and Nostalgia Emporium, Indianapolis, IN; Comic City, Minneapolis, MN; Comic Kingdom, Chicago, IL; The Comic Rack, Spokane, WA; The Comic Store, Lancaster, PA; Curious Book Shop, East Lansing, MI; Eide's Comix, SF and Records, Pittsburgh, PA; Fabulous Fiction Book Store, Worcester, MA; Fantastic World Book Store, Fort Worth, TX; Golden Fleece Magazines, Cleveland, OH; King's Komix Kastle, Boise, ID; Larry's Comic Store, Chicago, IL; The Paperback Junction, Cincinnati, OH; Starship Enterprises, Hollywood, FL; Super Universe, Cambridge, MA; The Turning Page, Milwaukee, WI

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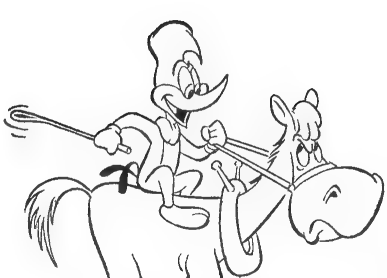
Cel Break

By Jim Korkis



FREE ANIMATION BOOK. That's right. How would you like a free animation book? The introduction to the book is written by Leonard Maltin, author of OF MICE AND MAGIC. The front and back covers are original color drawings by Leslie Cabarga, author of THE FLEISCHER STORY, and features Popeye, Bugs Bunny, Pink Panther and many other characters. The text is written by Jerry Beck, author of THE WARNER BROTHERS CARTOONS, and Beck has used stills, lobby cards and production drawings to illustrate his descriptions of hundreds of cartoons. Sound too good to be true? Well it's not. Beck works for United Artists, specifically the branch of UA that rents out 16mm films to schools and film groups. He was able to convince his superiors to allow him to produce the best-looking cartoon-rental catalogue I've ever seen. (I'm a teacher and I've seen a lot of catalogues!) The catalogue is free to any film clubs, college movie groups or any businesses that request it BUT that request must be sent in on paper bearing the letterhead of that group. The request should be sent to United Artists Corporation, 729 Seventh Avenue, New York, NY 10019. (But I'm also sure that this stipulation won't stop any enterprising young animation fans who want a copy. If you like the catalogue, it wouldn't hurt to write to UA and let them know how terrific it really is. Maybe they'll allow Beck to put together another one that will surpass even this outstanding effort.)

MORE BECK. By the way, Jerry Beck is looking into the possibilities of reprinting and revising THE WARNER BROTHERS CARTOONS, the book he co-authored with Will Friedwald. Few fans are aware of the restrictions that confronted these two authors. They had only two months to produce the book and they were denied the use of illustrations because Warner Bros. was involved in the production of Mike Barrier's books. Despite the grumbling over the Beck-Friedwald endeavor, only two Warner Bros. general-release cartoons are missing and there are only a few "misleading" plot synopses. Having met both Jerry and Will, I know them to be concerned so I wish them luck with their attempts to republish their fine research with all the additions and corrections. (THE WARNER BROTHERS CARTOONS by Beck and Friedwald is still available for $15.00 plus appropriate postage from Scarecrow Press, 52 Liberty Street, P.O. Box 656, Metuchen, NJ 08840.)

MARINELAND SOLD AGAIN. Hanna-Barbera's Marineland, the oceanside amusement park which has been struggling as a result of declining attendance for most of the past fifteen years is being sold for the third time since 1971. In 1977, Taft Broadcasting and Kroger Co. closed the park for seven months of renovation and the addition to its aquatic theme of Yogi Bear and other cartoon characters from Hanna-Barbera Productions, also owned by Taft. The new owner is a group called Far East Hotels and Entertainment Ltd., a Hong Kong-based operator of hotels, amusement parks, movie theatres and bowling centers in several countries.

TED BAXTER IS NOT DEAD! There seems to be some confusion as to whether Ted Knight was the voice of the character of Aquaman on the Filmation Saturday morning series. Adding to the confusion, Ted Knight himself mentioned on the Dave Allen show from Australia that he did indeed do the voice of Aquaman. However, listening closely to the repeats of the shows in the L.A. area, I can't quite believe it. I suspect that like many actors, Knight has forgotten exactly what he did on the show or when he says he did the voice on AQUAMAN, he meant the show and not the character. (Knight did do narration and villain-voices for the show; we're pretty certain Marvin Miller was Aquaman. MT)

THE SECRET OF NIHM. Don Bluth Productions came into being in the fall of 1979 when Bluth, Gary Goldman and John Pomeroy led a group of animators in a mass resignation from Walt Disney Productions' animation department and formed their own company. THE SECRET OF NIMH is the long-anticipated first feature-length motion picture to come from this new company and it's due for release in the summer of 1982 by United Artists. It will feature voice work by Dom DeLuise, Peter Strauss, John Carradine, Hermione Baddeley, Paul Shenar, Derek Jacobi and Elizabeth Hartman. (BANJO THE WOODPILE CAT, a half-hour special made by Don Bluth Productions in December 1979 will be shown on television this year for the first time.) This animated feature certainly looks promising and there Is a big article on Bluth Productions coming up in ANIMANIA.

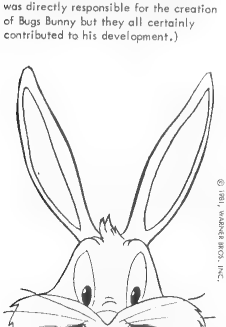
WOODY WOODPECKER IS STILL POPULAR. Recently, an original painting by Walter Lantz of Woody Woodpecker painting a picture of himself (a la the Norman Rockwell classic) sold at auction for $29,000. Neiman-Marcus is featuring displays of early Woody (and other Lantz characters) memorabilia along with the new collector plates featuring the famous woodpecker. (A limited edition of 10,000 plates sold out in two days at a recent show.)

DISNEY WISHES ON A STAR. Disney and Group W Satellite Communications have announced plans for a new pay-cable network. The satellite-delivered channel to begin in early 1983 will feature films and old TV programs from Disney's extensive library of family shows as well as new productions. The two companies have yet to agree specifically on what Disney will be providing. (For years, NBC tried to convince Disney to run some of its animated features but Disney steadfastly refused and the fear of home-taping of the TV showings still upsets the Disney organization.)

McLAREN BOOK. Some animation fans may be aware of the work of Nor-

man McLaren who is starting to receive some recognition for his past work in the form of various retrospectives across the country. There is a scrapbook-catalogue called McLAREN by Gus Glover which features little text but stills from 67 of McLaren's 71 films. This outsize (11' x 15") paperback is available for $8.00 in English, French, German, Spanish or Portugese from: Customer Services, National Film Board, Box 6100, Montreal, PQ Canada H3C 3H5.

WHAT'S UP DOC? A friend recently sent me a clipping which announced that "Ralph Wolfe, creator of the original Bugs Bunny character, will be at Ah Motif Fashions" to autograph sketches. This isn't the first time Wolfe has popped up. About a year ago, the L.A. Times ran a short article on Wolfe wherein he claimed the credit for Bugs Bunny. At that time, the response from Warner Bros. Studios was that they didn't want to get involved but that they didn't support Wolfe's claim. Perhaps too much time had been wasted on trying to determine the real "creator" of Bugs Bunny. (Chuck Jones, Tex Avery, Bob Clampett and many others have been hurt by this idle speculation. It's obvious that the truth of the matter is that no one artist was directly responsible for the creation of Bugs Bunny but they all certainly contributed to his development.)



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DISNEY ANIMATION SCHOOL. In August 1981 Disney Studios formally established a School of Animation where fourteen young artists were selected and hired by the studio at a special trainee rate for an eight week instruction session. The ones whose work was found satisfactory were hired to work on THE BLACK CAULDRON and MICKEY'S CHRISTMAS CAROL (a special for the WALT DISNEY program scheduled to appear next Christmas). Eric Larson, the last of the famous "Nine Old Men" to remain at the studio works as a training director with the group. The studio plans at least three more training sessions in 1982 with groups of comparable size and to continue the program beyond that because the goal is to double the output of the animation department. The studio hopes to produce one animated feature every two years on a staggered schedule.

A NEW ANIMATION FAN. This is a good time to remind everyone that ANIMANIA #22 is still available for $2.50 from David Mruz, 3112 Holmes Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55408. As you are reading this announcement, keep in mind that David and Kathy are putting together issue #23 for release in early February. Although it is not official yet, I'd like to announce that ANIMANIA will probably have a new editor. However, it may take a while for him to take over the production chores since he just arrived in late October at the Mruz household. Congratulations to Dave and Kathy for the newest addition to animation fandom: Charles David Lee Mruz. Twenty years from now he'll probably be putting out ANIMANIA with the help of the newest Engel (who was supposed to arrive in mid-December) and the newest Thingvall (who is scheduled to appear early in 1982). As usual, I'm the slowpoke of the group. Lori and I will be married in June so I guess it will take at least a year from then for there to be another Korkis who is crazy about cartoons.

ANIMATION NEWS, CLIPPINGS, LETTERS OF SUPPORT, ETC. may be sent to Jim Korkis, 707 West Doran, Glendale, CA 91203.

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CRUSADER RABBIT --
THE JAY WARD CONNECTION

Ecclesiastes 1:2, 12:12

By Gary Ricker

1:2 - "all is vanity," 12:12 - "of the making of books there is no end..."

What is a fanzine? It's a question I've been wrestling with since this column began. I stumbled into fandom in the mid-sixties -- strictly as a spectator, writing long LOCs that went mostly un-

published -- and waited nearly a decade before giving in to the vain urge. Those were the days when "popular culture" was the term just being applied to the lesser arts of TV, B movies, comics and adventure/science fiction, even as I was discovering my mainstream literary heroes. Two hundred and more of my zine went out to the faithful (sporting a Jim Engel bacover, completists) and I reviewed comic book/strip-related volumes for the Chicago SUN-TIMES, but I guess my heart wasn't in it. Engel, Fiala and me were in a north side basement comic shop when a local junior-college perfessor showed up with an armload of Marvel original art. He'd conned it out of the Man with what I'd guess was a flattering letter on college stationary. "Of course, if I get fired," he said, "this stuff goes with me." It was sort of like being told that behind the door is either the lady or the tiger, and out pops Gary Groth.

Oh sure, it took a lot more wearing down before I gafiated completely --I'm not sure I ever did; I sold four FF #'Is for $12-22 (hi, Chuck!) apiece, yet kept Kirby's Fourth World and Captain Americas, as well as a slew of his and Joe Simon's wondrous romance books. The damage was done, in any case: childhood dreams were betrayed by commerce, Bob Overstreet found a distributor, and the guys I congregated with monthly in a savings-and-loan basement no longer begged to differ when it came to "fan prices" and "dealer prices." "Humuchiziss?" you'd ask, coming upon a run of unmarked baggies. Out would come the Guide, and it was time to slink.

I sold my comics to live, in the first two quarters of 1975, while waiting for unemployment checks to arrive. I was helping to support my family the year before -- mom, grandma, little brother, unemployed dad and me -- when dad and I fought. I found an apartment, barely a mile from home. Suddenly I was out of a job with 8.5 million other Americans.

I tried to romance a soon-to-be divorced woman with my pulp-begotten riches, but it was a doomed affair. I found work as an advertising artist for the other Chicago paper. Dealer Frank Kraft set up shop almost in the shadow of Tribune Tower, and I began taxing my racial memory with DEVIL DINOSAUR and THE ETERNALS.

But fanzines, yes: I restricted myself to the comic-shop offerings -- TCR, TCJ, COMIXSCENE, and others. Somewhere I still have a brittle legal-pad page festooned with the upcoming numbers of zines that were evidently mailed to the Bermuda Triangle, care of me. (And you know? The crooks had big names, just like in politics. People seemed to forget, and they had another chance. Writing, editing and publishing again, casting fannish aspersions as if they'd never absconded with hundreds of buck'n'-a-quarter checks or instigated cheesy "pyramid" schemes.)

Listen to me: where have I come close to trying to answer my initial question -- what is a fanzine? I go on and on about comics and fandom -- did I sell my fanzines in the recession of '75? Only the ones that would fetch any cash: WITZEND #'1-7 (unmissed) and complete runs of Menomonee Falls GAZETTEs and GUARDIANs (sob). I saved my FANTASY ILLUSTRATEDs/ GRAPHIC STORY MAGAZINEs, FUNNYWORLDs, GOSH WOW!s and so forth. I could read those zines again without anger, without noticing that lettercol correspondents had clever in-joke names and addresses. The fan world shifted oddly on its axis, and a big zine devoted three issues to playing judge and jury to my friend, Gary Reynolds. The large-circulation zines either disappeared or metamorphosed into multi-media press-release reprinters. Objectivity gave way to boosterism as fanzines became full-time professions. The new $700-an-ounce Golden-Age was upon us: Jack Kirby moved to Saturday morning TV, Ray Harryhausen and Willis O'Brien were compared to computers and judged quaint, and Robert Silverberg considered trying Hollywood scripting.

We live in an age of homogenization, standardization. You can drive cross-country and count on the fact that there's a McDonald's or Burger King at the next oasis. The food may not be good, but you know what expect. You can move to a new city every week and probably never miss an episode of DALLAS. If your local comics shop closed tomorrow, you COULD go back to haunting newsstands. Add to this bland custard the somewhat odd and wild leaven of fanzines, and -- in a small way -- life is worth living. (Pardon my jumbled metaphors -- I'm warming to my subject.) It has been a joy to receive the cartons postmarked -- UPS marked? -- Menomonee Falls, WI these past months, and even more fun to see the sometimes weird diversity of your fannish efforts. I've offended some of you, I know, and some of you have offended me, for that matter. I apologize for not reviewing Don McGregor's book -- it was simply too awful, if you must know. It has been odd to see crudzines boasting 2000-plus circulations, and sad to see fine, unheralded zines publish bitter, this-is-the-last-issue editorials. It's been boring to try to wade through hackneyed Space Opera strips, panels flush with Higgins and Snopake spatter; more numbing still to flip page after page of barbarians, crags, castles, and unclad women (and the Conan movie yet to come, opening more neos' eyes! Aargh!) The thing I would say to aspiring stripsters is this: it hasn't all been done to death. See DAREDEVIL AND THE LITTLE WISE GUYS; see Alan Hanley's moral and entertaining efforts; see Kirby's romance and kid gangs -- put a heart between head and hunger and you will surpass every effort in current popular culture. Drawing, writing, editing -- you must take a truth as your own, you must believe in something. In comics there have been a variety of truths: the flag; the power and purity of one truly good man; the strength of true love; the absurdity of existence; science and reason versus fascism, and on into the greyer areas of revenge and consuming anger. Alas, the pros cannot be counted on to guide their characters consistently: people die for contrived reasons, change costumes, gain new powers in the nick of time. Pros DO have deadlines; fanzines do not. Take your time and do a good job, even if your first issue is also your last. Think, correspond with other fans, get outside opinions -- and send your best possible zine to me. What is a fanzine? Last winter, my mother came to visit me here in the sunbelt. Was there anything she could bring me, she asked? Well, gee, I said -- a box of fanzines would be nice. I gave her their approximate basement location and waited eagerly. The cabbie eyed me oddly as he brought in several pieces of luggage and one heavy cardboard box. Late that evening, after discussing all the news of home, I tore into the box, looking forward to reading my old fanzines. There they were... Kirby's Fourth World, Stan and Jack's TALES OF SUSPENSE, and Jack and Joe's YOUNG ROMANCE, YOUNG LOVE, YOUNG YOUNG YOUNG. What is a fanzine? Don't ask my mom.

IN GENERAL

THE AUSTRALIAN COMIC BUYERS GUIDE No. 2, Joseph Italiano, 27 Percy Street, Mitcham 3132 Victoria, Australia. 60c, 6/$3.60.

An unassuming Australian newszine reprinting bullpen-produced Marvel puff-pieces, a smattering of other U.S. news, a column on why the X-Men and Teen Titans are just everso swell, and a wonderful two-and-a-half page scoop on DC's acquisition of Marvel. This last very well thought out and almost convincing.

BEM No. 34, Martin Lock, 3 Marlow Court, Britannia Square, Worcester, WR1 3DP, England. 6/$15.00 by air, checks payable to Steven R. Johnson.

BEM's been a favorite since this column first appeared: the writing is often thoughtful, sometimes delightfully cheeky -- and the art, while spotty, often features the pure comic stylings of Brian Bolland. Real soon now I'll

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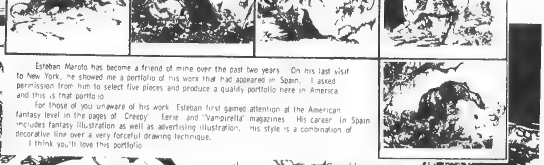
DISPLACED IN TIME.

A portfolio by Esteban Maroto

Esteban Maroto has become a friend of mine over the past two years. On his last visit to New York, he showed me a portfolio of his work that had appeared in Spain. I asked permission from him to select five pieces and produce a quality portfolio here in America and this is that portfolio.

For those of you unaware of his work, Esteban first gained attention at the American fantasy level in the pages of "Creepy", "Eerie" and "Vampirella" magazines. His career in Spain includes fantasy illustration as well as advertising illustration. His style is a combination of decorative line over a very forceful drawing technique.

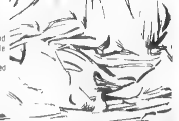
I think you'll love this portfolio.



WINDDREAMS

A portfolio by Rick Bryant

If you're one of those people who has followed the work of Rick Bryant, you'll understand what I mean when I say, "Rick has come into his own". Rick has been a fantasy fan favorite for years now, but in this portfolio, we feel that he has surpassed all of our expectations. Style, drawing and technique are all of lasting quality. And I for one, am personally delighted to be able to present this first portfolio of Rick Bryant.



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send for a pile of back issues and tell you if I strike gold. Current ish features a short Kurt Schaffenberger interview, an appreciation of CEREBUS with a Dave Sim full-pager, and lots of columns and letters. Bolland cover, some eccentric and imaginative layout. I'd enjoy having a couple beers with these people; that's about as close as I can come to four stars.

COMICS NEWSLINE No. 22, Frank Verzyl, P.O. Box 711, Lindenhurst, NY 11757. 75¢/6/$4.00.

CN, a bi-monthly newszine which I enjoyed as a tabloid, is now magazine format -- pure pro comics news with large cover repros. Exhaustive and fun.

DUCKBERG TIMES No. 12, Dana and Frank Gabbard, 400 Valleyview, Selah, WA 98942. $1.00.

Good little narrow-focus zine warmly obsessed with Mr. Barks and his waterfowl. Reprints of long-gone fanzine articles, Barks letters, and a revealing column of the thoughts of Walt Disney by Jim Korkis.

FANFARE No. 4. Fanfare, 329 North Avenue 66, Los Angeles, CA 90042. $3.50, 4/$11.00.

Waiter? Waiter! Yes, please -- a plate of crow at the front table for our friend Mr. Ricker, here. [Cough, choke!] Uh, gee, Bill, this -- ack! -- ain't bad... Boy, this is some swell fanzine, I'll tell ya. After loving/hating ish #3 (I compared it to airhead-fandom's PREVUE) -- longing for Bill Spicer's earlier efforts, here he is with what feels like a timeless fanzine. Diverse subject matter: Huckleberry Hound, 3-D movies and comics, Vargas, pin-ups, Gleason Comics' Charles Biro (by Art Scott), pre-EC Ingels art, weird L.A. architecture, thought-provoking letters and more in a well-designed, nay, striking package. A labor of love, as evidenced by the witty indicia. If you subscribe to only one fanzine this year, this is it.

MILT CANIFF: REMBRANDT OF THE COMIC STRIP, Flying Buttress Publications, P.O. Box 254, Endicott, NY 13760. $6.95 paper, $12.50 hardcover.

Ex-Marvel and Field Syndicate editor Rick Marschall has exhumed a 1946 promotional biography of seminal stripper (TERRY AND THE PIRATES, STEVE CANYON) Milt Caniff and added an introduction. Loads of illustrations constitute a short course in the dying art of brush-inking. Recommended to TERRY fans.

SPACE ACADEMY NEWSLETTER No. 8 and 9. Joe Sarno, P.O. Box 302, Des Plaines, IL 60017. 75¢, 6/$3.00.

The enjoyable little house organ for '50s kid space-exploration TV and radio shows. Eight features show-by-show synopses of dozens of TOM CORBETT, SPACE CADET programs and nine prints the script of the final live TCSC broadcast. Classifieds and new and old reviews round out this quirky but interesting zines.

STRIPS/FICTION

FLAMING CARROT COMICS No. 1, the Kilian Barracks, P.O. Box 220, Marietta, GA 30061. $2.45.

Seems this mild-mannered existential poet employed by the phone company read over 5000 comic books in a single sitting to win a bet. He won, but his mind could not take the strain and he became...simple. Guy's head is replaced with a four-foot carrot spouting flames, of course. A tad overpriced, but strange, inspired fun.

THE MIKE MIST MINUTE MIST-ERIES, Eclipse Enterprises, 81 Delaware Street, Staten Island, NY 10304. $1.50.

38 six-panel, one-page whodunits by Max Allan Collins (detective fictioneer and DICK TRACY scripter) and Terry Beatty. The format wears a bit thin; I'd have enjoyed say, half the mist-eries accompanied by an unreprinted, longer strip.

MOD No. 1, Krupp Comic Works, Inc., No. 2 Swamp Road, Princeton, WI 54968. $1.50.

Crisp, even-quality underground, mostly drawn or written by Terry Beatty. Humor and satire strips also by Kochell, Kato, Burden (of FLAMING CARROT renown), Wray, and Griffith. Only one klinker, by Schroeter.

POTBOILER No. 2, Lari Davidson Books, 8471 Bennett Road, Richmond, BC V6Y 1N6, Canada. $1.50.

After I dismissed PB #1 as not being worth your time, Davidson wrote my editors, enclosing issue 2, requesting I list contents and contributors -- those names in particular: Hammell, Manachino, Heath, Cox and Reichel. A favorite of mine, Earl Geier, turns in a less-than-his-best strip. Al Manachino writes a wonderful Lovecraft parody, and Don Thompson and Kurt Reichel contribute a haunting little post-WW3 strip.

SCAT COMICS GAZETTE Vol. 3, No. 10, P.O. Box 326, Northampton, MA 01060. 10/$2.50 in MA, 10/$5.00 everywhere else.

Fellow named Renrut has a fine two-page strip about his little-league baseball career, complete with baseball card and year-by-year statistics. Don Brunelle and John Hayman's efforts are notable. Unassuming pulp-paper fun.

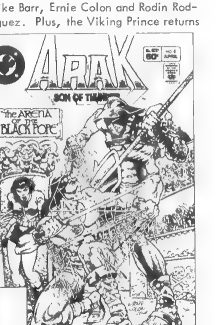
SMILIN' ED No. 4, Fantaco Enterprises, 21 Central Avenue, Albany, NY 12210. $1.50.

The little rat meets television in an unhilarious issue. Fred Hembeck sustains the tedium.

VISIONS No. 3, Atlanta Comics and Fantasy Fair, Ltd., 335 Terrydale Dr., Marietta, GA 30067. $3.60, 4/$10.00.

This issue serves double-duty as a con program book and stripzine. Rod Whigham continues his well-drawn Lightrunner strip, and the ubiquitous Mr. Burden contributes a somewhat lackluster Flaming Carrot saga. The issue is rounded out with a few unremarkable full-page drawings.

ARAK/SON OF THUNDER No. 8, April. "The Arena of the Black Pope" is by Roy Thomas, Gerry Conway, Mike Barr, Ernie Colon and Rodin Rodriguez. Plus, the Viking Prince returns



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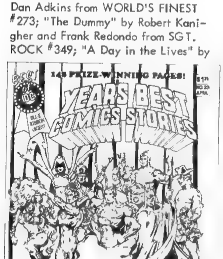
in "Frozen Hell For a Viking" by Robert Kanigher and Jan Duursema. Colon did the cover. [1/7]

THE BEST OF DC No. 23, April. This is another YEAR'S BEST COMIC STORIES collection, and includes: "To Kill a Legend" by Alan Brennert and Dick Giordano from DETECTIVE #500; "Sivana's Nobel Prize" by E. Nelson Bridwell, Don Newton and Dan Adkins from WORLD'S FINEST #273; "The Dummy" by Robert Kanigher and Frank Redondo from SGT. ROCK #349; "A Day in the Lives" by

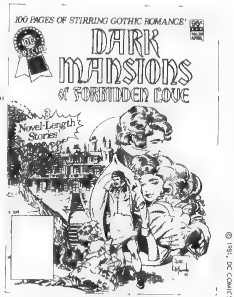


Marv Wolfman, George Perez and Romeo Tanghal from NEW TEEN TITANS #8; "The Piper at the Gates of Hell" by J. Marc De Matteis and Dan Spiegle from HOUSE OF MYSTERY #288; "The Haunting" by Michael Fleisher, Dick Ayers and Tony DeZuniga from JONAH HEX #53; "The Triumph" by Mike Barr, Len Wein, Joe Staton and Frank McLaughlin from TALES OF THE GREEN LANTERN CORPS #3; "The Pursuit of Joy" by Mike Barr and Dan Spiegle from DETECTIVE COMICS #507; "The Dying Days of Lois and Lana" by Cary Bates, Curt Swan and Frank Chiaramonte from SUPERMAN #363; and "Whatever Happened to the Crimson Avenger?" by Len Wein, Alex Saviuk and Dennis Jensen from DC COMICS PRESENTS #38. George Perez and Dick Giordano did the cover. [1/7]

DC COMICS PRESENTS No. 44, April. "The Man Who Created Villains" is by Bob Rozakis, E. Nelson Bridwell, Irv Novick and Frank McLaughlin. Superman and the Dial "H" For Hero team of Christopher King and Victoria Grant meet for the first time as Chris suddenly dials himself into villainous forms. Ross Andru and Dick Giordano did the cover. [1/7]

DC SPECIAL BLUE-RIBBON DIGEST No. 20, April. This issue features DARK MANSIONS OF FORBIDDEN LOVE as DC retests the gothic romance

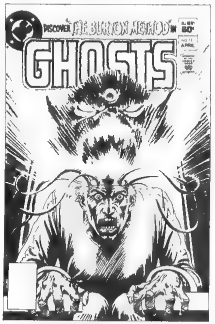
waters with these reprints: "To Wed the Devil" by Joe Orlando, Len Wein and Tony DeZuniga from SINISTER HOUSE OF SECRET LOVE #2; "Bride of the Falcon" by Frank Robbins, Alex Toth, Doug Wildey and Frank Giacoia from SINISTER HOUSE #3; "Doorway to Nightmare" from DOORWAY TO NIGHTMARE #1 by David Michelinie and Val Mayerik; and a two-page Michael Kaluta pin-up of Madame Xanadu. Joe Orlando did the cover. [1/7]



GHOSTS No. 111, April. In this issue (the penultimate): "The Burton Method" by Dan Mishkin, Gary Cohn, Mark Texiera and Gary Mushynsky; 'The Last Kung Fu Movie" by Bill Kelley, Keith Giffen and Gary Martin; and "Shrieeeek!" by Sheldon Mayer and Steve Ditko. Joe Kubert did the cover. [1/7]

JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA No. 201, April. "A Hero For All Seasons" is by Gerry Conway, Don Heck and Brett Breeding. With Green Arrow back in the fold, you'd think the team would be at full-strength again, but Ultraa returns to sorely test them. George Perez and Dick Giordano did the cover. [1/7]

WEIRD WAR TALES No. 110, April. "Roses Are Red, Blood is Redder" Part 2 is by Robert Kanigher and Dan Spiegle, and it stars the Creature Commandos, who gain a new recruit. Also:



"Matter Over Mind" by David Allikas and Rudy Zamora; and "The Frogman and the Mermaid" by Kanigher and Angel Trinidad. Rich Buckler and Romeo Tanghal did the cover. [1/7]

WONDER WOMAN No. 290, April. "Panic Over Pennsylvania Avenue" is by Roy Thomas, Paul Kupperberg, Gene Colan and Romeo Tanghal. It's WW vs. Captain Wonder, Silver Swan and Dr. Psycho in the resolution of the recent continuity. Also, Huntress appears in "Death Atop Its High Tower Calls" by Paul Levitz, Joe Staton and Bruce Patterson. The Crime Lord series

continues. Colan and Dick Giordano did the cover. [1/7]

BATMAN No. 346, April. "Half a Hero" is by Gerry Conway, Gene Colan and Klaus Jansen. Two-Face returns. Also included is Catwoman in "In the Land of the Dead" by Bruce Jones, Trevor Von Eeden and Pablo Marcos. Rich Buckler and Dick Giordano did the cover. [1/14]

THE FLASH No. 308, April. "The Good, the Bad and the Beautiful" is by Cary Bates, Carmine Infantino and Dennis Jensen. Barry Allen's boyhood friends return, but they're not around to reminisce. And Dr. Fate appears in "Dawn of the Sixth Sun" by Martin Pasko, Keith Giffen and Larry Mahlstedt. Infantino and Dick Giordano did the cover. [1/14]

G.I. COMBAT No. 240, April. Jeb and crew appear in "The Demon Tank" by Robert Kanigher, Dick Ayers and Sam Glanzman, and "I'll Be Back -- Or Dead" by Kanigher and Glanzman.

The O.S.S. appears in "Highway in the Sky" by Kanigher and E.R. Cruz, and other stories are "Soldier By the Book" by George Kashdan and Nestor Redondo, and "Hero Without Glory" by Kashdan and Joe Matucenio. Joe Kubert did the cover. [1/14]

JONAH HEX No. 59, April. "The Night of the White Lotus" is by Michael Fleisher, Dick Ayers and Tony DeZuniga. Jonah and the missus try to patch it up, but the nasty Indians don't want to let them. Also, El Diablo appears in "New Sabbath" by Gary Cohn, Dick Ayers and Tony DeZuniga. DeZuniga did the cover. [1/14]

THE NEW TEEN TITANS No. 18, April. "A Pretty Girl is Like a Maladi" is by Marv Wolfman, George Perez and Romeo Tanghal. Back in #18 of the original TEEN TITANS run, a different character called Starfire appeared, and the Russian super-hero returns in this issue. Perez did the cover. [1/14]

SUPERMAN No. 370, April. "Better Vengeance Through Chemo-stry" is by Len Wein, Curt Swan and Frank Chiaramonte. From the files of the Metal Men comes Chemo, the robot made of chemical waste, to menace Metropolis. Also, the Inbetween Years are explored in "Super-Visions From Beyond" by Bob Rozakis, Kurt Schaffenberger and Frank McLaughlin. Ross Andru and Dick Giordano did the cover. [1/14]

THE BRAVE AND THE BOLD No. 185, April. "Falcon's Lair" is by Don Kraar and Adrian Gonzales plus an inker. Batman and the Green Arrow team-up and one of their adversaries is Robin. Also, Nemesis stars in "Triple Threat" by Cary Burkett and Dan Spiegle. Rich Buckler and Dick Giordano did the cover. [1/21]

GREEN LANTERN No. 151, April. "Star-Cycle" is by Marv Wolfman, Joe Staton and Frank McLaughlin. It's on into space for Green Lantern as he says goodbye to Carol and Tom

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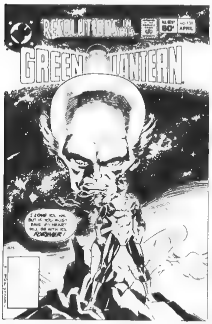
and resolves the current plotline. In "Esprit de Corps" by Paul Kupperberg and Carmine Infantino, a member of the Green Lantern Corps makes the supreme sacrifice. Staton and Steve Mitchell did the cover. [1/21]

HOUSE OF MYSTERY No. 303, April. Andrew Bennett (I, VAMPIRE) appears in "Carnival of Souls" by Bruce Jones and Tom Sutton. Also included are "House Odds" by Dan Mishkin, Gary



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Cohn and Nestor Redondo; and "Vengeance at the Creature Feature" by Jack Harris and Dan Spiegle. Joe Kubert did the cover. [1/21]

THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES No. 286, April. "Old Friends, New Relatives and Other Corpses" is by Paul Levitz, Pat Broderick and Bruce Patterson. Dr. Regulus returns. Also, Princess Projectra and Karate Kid star in "A Crown For the Princess" by Levitz, Keith Giffen and Patterson. Broderick and Romeo Tanghal did the cover. [1/21]

THE PHANTOM ZONE No. 4, April. "The Phantom Planet" is by Steve Gerber, Gene Colan and Tony DeZuniga. The mini-series concludes. Colan and Dick Giordano did the cover. [1/21]

SGT. ROCK No. 363, April. "No Grave For Easy" is by Robert Kanigher and Frank Redondo. Other stories include: "Fire Exit" by Kanigher and Tom Mandrake; "Deadly Victory" by Bill Kelley and Tim Truman; and "The Infiltrator" by Ron Randall. Joe Kubert did the cover. [1/21]

THE SUPERMAN FAMILY No. 217, April. In this issue: Mr. and Mrs. Superman are cover featured and star in "Back to Square One" by E. Nelson Bridwell, Kurt Schaffenberger and Frank Chiaramonte. Also, Supergirl in "We Interrupt This Program..." by Paul Kupperberg, Win Mortimer and Vince Colletta; Lois Lane in "Sing a Song of Murder" by Tamsyn O'Flynn, Bob Oksner and Colletta; and Jimmy Olsen in "Arrest Me -- I'm a Murderer" by Kupperberg, Jose Delbo and Colletta. Rich Buckler and Dick Giordano did the cover. [1/21]

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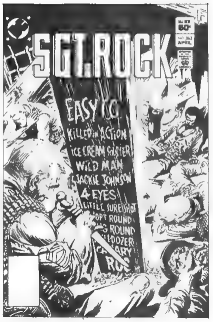
WARLORD No. 56, April. "Conspiracy" is by Mike Grell, Mark Texiera and Mike DeCarlo. Travis is back in Skartaris to take up court life. Then, Arion, Lord of Atlantis experiences a "Trial By Ice" in the story by Paul Kupperberg and Jan Duursema. Grell did the cover. [1/21]

ACTION COMICS No. 530, April. "Fantastic Deadly Voyage" is by Marv Wolfman, Curt Swan and Dan Adkins. The team-up with Brainiac concludes in their tale of mutual interest. Plus, Aquaman and Atom team-up in "Home ...Home On the Waves" by Bob Rozakis, Alex Saviuk and Frank Chiara-



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monte. Ross Andru and Dick Giordano did the cover. [1/28]

ALL-STAR SQUADRON No. 8, April. "The Afternoon of Assassins" is by Roy Thomas, Adrian Gonzales and Jerry Ordway, plus Gerry Conway, Don Heck and Ordway. The first half of the previously unseen STEEL #6 is incorporated into this issue as Steel, the Indestructible Man joins the Squadron. Joe Kubert did the cover. [1/28]

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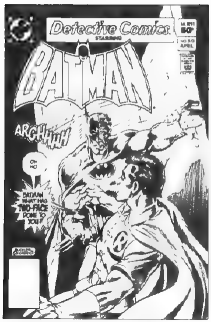
CAPTAIN CARROT AND HIS AMAZING ZOO CREW No. 2, April. "Armordillo" is by Roy Thomas, Alfredo Alcala and Scott Shaw. We really don't know what's going on in this one, and we're admitting it. Shaw did the cover. [1/28]

DETECTIVE COMICS No. 513, April. "Half a Hero" Part 2 is by Gerry Conway, Don Newton and Dan Adkins. Two-Face's battle with Batman and Robin is continued from BATMAN #346. Also, Batgirl stars in "Duel With Demons" by Cary Burkett, Jose Delbo



and Joe Giella. Rich Buckler and Dick Giordano did the cover. [1/28]

THE NEW ADVENTURES OF SUPERBOY No. 28, April. "Our Son, the Super-Betrayer" is by Cary Bates, Kurt Schaffenberger and Dave Hunt. The mystery of his past continues to baffle Superboy. Then Dial "H" For Hero takes up residency as the back-up with "The Senses-Taker Comes to Town" by Bob Rozakis, E. Nelson Bridwell, Alex Saviuk and Joe Giella. Schaffenberger did the cover. [1/28]

THE UNEXPECTED No. 221, April. The next-to-last issue features "Day After Doomsday" by Robin Snyder and Vic Catan; "MEM, the Energy Monster" by Steve Ditko and Gary Mart'n; "Good Deed" by Bill Kelley, Dick Ayers and Bruce Patterson; and "The Trouble With Air" by Gerry Conway, Mike Zeck and John Beatty. Joe Kubert did the cover. [1/28]

UNKNOWN SOLDIER No. 262, April. "Canvas Battlefield" is by Bob Haney, Dick Ayers and Gerry Talaoc. If the cover's to be believed, Unk battles hand-to-hand with Adolf Hitler. Plus, Ba oon Buster returns in "Killers of the Sky" by Robert Kanigher and Dan Spiegle, and Tomahawk returns to fight the Revolutionary War in "Kill General Washington" by Bob Haney, Jose Delbo and Gary Mushynsky. Joe Kubert d'd the cover. [1/28]

WORLD'S FINEST COMICS No. 278, April. Superman, Batman and Hawkman team-up in "Assault on Thanagar" by Bob Rozakis, Rich Buckler and Rodin Rodriguez. The solo tales include: Captain Marvel vs. the Darkling in "The Power of Darkness" by E. Nelson Bridwell, Don Newton and Larry Mahlstedt; Zatanna takes on puppy-nappers in "Dog-Day Afternoon" by Paul Kupperberg and Dan Spiegle; and Green Arrow stars in "The Archer and the Assassin" by Mike Barr, Trevor Von Eeden and Larry Mahlstedt. George Perez and Romeo Tanghal did the cover. [1/28]

Whitman Coming Comics

BUGS BUNNY No. 233, February. 2/3 new, 1/3 reprint. [1/7]

Walt Disney CHIP 'N' DALE No. 76, January. All-new. [1/7]

Walt Disney's COMICS AND STORIES No. 496, January. Reprints. [1/7]

Walt Disney DONALD DUCK No. 237, January. All-new. [1/7]

Walt Disney HUEY, DEWEY AND LOUIE JUNIOR WOODCHUCKS No 73, January. All new. [1/7]

Walt Disney SUPER GOOF No. 68, January. All new stories. [1/7]

TWEETY AND SYLVESTER No. 113, February. Two-thirds of the stories are new. [1/7]

Walt Disney UNCLE SCROOGE No. 194, January. New stories. [1/7]

YOSEMITE SAM No. 76, February. Two-thirds new. [1/7]

BUGS BUNNY No. 234, January. 2/3 new. [1/14]

DAFFY DUCK No. 140, January. 2/3 new. [1/14]

FLASH GORDON No. 36, February. All-new. [1/14]

GRIMM'S GHOST STORIES No. 58, February. 2/3 new stories. [1/14]

LITTLE LULU No. 264, February. 2/3 new stories. [1/14]

THE PINK PANTHER No. 81, February. 2/3 new stories. [1/14]

TOM AND JERRY No. 340, January. All reprints. [1/14]

TUROK, SON OF STONE No. 129, February. 2/3 new stories. [1/14]

TWEETY AND SYLVESTER No. 114, January. 2/3 new stories. [1/14]

Charlton Coming Comics

BATTLEFIELD ACTION No. 74, April. [1/7]

FIGHTIN' ARMY No. 157, April. [1/7]

GHOST MANOR No. 62, April. [1/14]

GUNFIGHTERS No. 72, April. [1/14]

FIGHTIN' MARINES No. 162, April. [1/21]

HAUNTED No. 61, April. [1/21]

ATTACK No. 34, May. [1/28]

SCARY TALES No. 32, May. [1/28]

Marvel Coming Comics

DAREDEVIL No. 181, April. "Mayhem" is by Frank Miller and Klaus Janson. In a special double-sized issue, all the plot-threads from the past year are sewn up. Elektra and Bullseye appear. Miller did the cover. [12/29]

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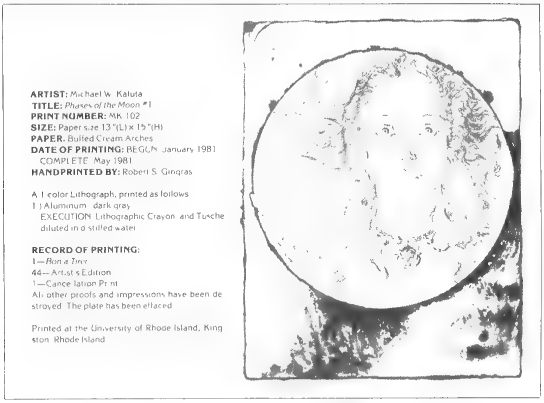

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PRINT NUMBER: MK 102
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PAPER: Bulled Cream Arches
DATE OF PRINTING: BEGUN January 1981
COMPLETE May 1981
HANDPRINTED BY: Robert S. Gingras

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DAZZLER No. 14, April. The issue's story is written by Danny Fingeroth and drawn by Frank Springer and Vince Colletta. On the west coast for a singing tour, Dazz and the Blue Shield take on the She-Hulk. [12/29]

DENNIS THE MENACE No. 6, April. [12/29]

*KA-ZAR THE SAVAGE No. 13, April. "Without Getting Killed or Caught" is by Bruce Jones, Brent Anderson and Armando Gil. The marriage of Shanna, Anderson did the cover. [12/29]

MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE No. 86, April. "Time Runs Like Sand" is by Tom DeFalco, Ron Wilson and Chic Stone. The Sandman and the Thing appear in a rather personal story. Also included is "Farewell My Lummox" by the same team which features Thing and Man-Thing. Wilson did the cover. [12/29]

SPIDER-WOMAN No. 43, April. "To Save a World" is by Chris Claremont and Steve Leialoha. It's Silver Samurai and Madame Hydra vs. Spider-Woman. Leialoha did the cover. [12/29]

THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN No. 227, April. "Going Straight" is by Roger Stern, John Romita Jr. and Jim Mooney. It isn't easy to go straight, as the Black Cat finds out. Romita Jr. and Frank Giacoia did the cover. [1/5]

CAPTAIN AMERICA No. 268, April. "Peace on Earth, Good Will Towards Men" is by J.M. DeMatteis, Mike Zeck and John Beatty. As Cap races to Colorado, World War III is in the offing, with the Defenders in the wings. Continued in DEFENDERS #109. Zeck and Beatty did the cover. [1/5]

CRAZY MAGAZINE No. 84, March. The movie parody is "American Werewolf in London" by Paul Kupperberg and Bob Camp, the TV parody of the Tonight Show by Murad Gumen and Kent Gamble. Bob Larkin did the cover. [1/5]

DOCTOR STRANGE No. 52, April. "Lifetimes" is by Roger Stern, Marshall Rogers and Terry Austin. Strange goes off in his mind to save Morgana Blessing, whilst his relationship with Clea is on the brink of changing. Rogers did the cover. [1/5]

GHOST RIDER No. 67, April. "Holding On to Sally" is by J. Marc DeMatteis, Don Perlin, Tom Sutton and Dave Simons. Ghost Rider widens his services to psychologist as he aids a disturbed woman whose experienced serious trauma. Bob Budiansky and Joe Rubinstein did the cover. [1/5]

*MICRONAUTS No. 40, April. "The Fugitive, the Frenzy and the Fantastic Four" is by Bill Mantlo, Gil Kane and Danny Bulanadi. The Micronauts enlist the aid of Mr. Fantastic in returning to Homeworld, but find Commander Tron's forces surrounding the Baxter Building. Franklin Richards and the Thing also appear. Mike Golden did the cover. [1/5]

*MOON KNIGHT No. 18, April. "Slayers' Elite" is by Doug Moench and Bill Sienkiewicz. In Jerusalem, Moon Knight finds himself amidst an army of vicious mercenaries. Sienkiewicz did the cover. [1/5]

THE SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN No. 74, March. "Lady In the Snows" is by Chris Claremont and Val Mayerik. The back-up is "The Blackstone", a Robert E. Howard story adapted by Roy Thomas and Gene Day. More pictures and text about the Conan film. Joe Jusko did the cover. [1/5]

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THOR No. 318, April. "The Lost Kingdom" is by Doug Moench, Gil Kane and Pablo Marcos. Loki and Karnilla aid a deposed king in destroying Thor in return for their help in putting him back in power. Kane did the cover. [1/5]

THE AVENGERS No. 218, April. "Born Again (And Again And Again...)" is by J. Marc DeMatteis, Don Perlin and Dan Green. What do you do when you're immortal and you want to die? You take the whole world with ya -- or at least that's what the character in this story tries. Perlin and Green did the cover. [1/12]

CONAN THE BARBARIAN No. 133, April. "The Witch of Windsor" is by Bruce Jones, Gil Kane and Danny Bulanadi. Conan must attempt to try to prevent himself from becoming another of the witch's victims. Kane did the cover. [1/12]

DENNIS THE MENACE DIGEST No. 1, April. Reprints of Standard/Pines/Fawcett DENNIS stories are included in this new bi-monthly, $1.25 digest. [1/12]

THE INCREDIBLE HULK No. 270, April. "The Goliath, the Gargoyle and the Galaxy Master" is by Bill Mantlo and Sal Buscema. Whilst the Hulk and the Hulk Hunters band together to battle the Galaxy Master and the Abomination, Rick Jones subjects himself to the trusty gamma rays. Al Milgrom and Steve Mitchell did the cover. [1/12]

MARVEL GRAPHIC NOVEL No. 1, 1982. "The Death of Captain Marvel" is by Jim Starlin. In the first of this square-backed, trade paperback, $5.95 full-color-on-quality paper series, Jim Starlin brings a final resolution to the Captain Marvel saga begun 10, thirteen years ago. Starlin did the cover. [1/12]

MARVEL TALES STARRING SPIDER-MAN No. 138, April. From AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #1, the two stories "Spider-Man" and "Spider-Man vs. the Chameleon" by Stan Lee and Steve Ditko are reprinted. Ditko's cover to #1 is also reprinted. [1/12]

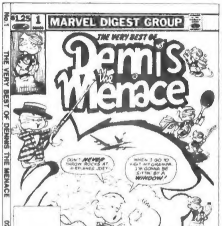
POWER MAN AND IRON FIST No. 80, April. "Rich Girls" is by Jo Duffy, Denys Cowan and Ricardo Villamonte. Luke and Danny are pestered by a couple of women who have no problems, so when they try to tell them of the menace of Montenegro, Power Man and Iron Fist won't believe them. Cowan and Frank Miller did the cover. [1/12]

ROM No. 29, April. "It's Dark As a Dungeon Deep Down in the Mines" is by Bill Mantlo, Sal Buscema and Joe Sinnott. Rom discovers the Missing Link, an old Hulk foe. Al Milgrom and Joe Sinnott did the cover. [1/12]

THE UNCANNY X-MEN No. 156, April. "Pursuit" is by Chris Claremont, Dave Cockrum and Bob Wiacek. The X-Men and Starjammers battle the rebellious Imperial Sh'iar. Cockrum and Wiacek did the cover. [1/12]

THE VERY BEST OF DENNIS THE MENACE No. 1, April. Lest you think you were getting the best reprints in the other DENNIS digest, this one's the VERY best. Also $1.25. [1/12]

THE DEFENDERS No. 106, April. "The War to End All Wars" is by J.M. De Matteis, Don Perlin and Joe Sinnott. From CAPTAIN AMERICA #268 the story continues. Dr. Strange, the Beast, Son of Satan and Daredevil track down Captain America, Hellcat, Valkyrie, the Gargoyle and Nighthawk and must stop the psychic assault which could easily cause World War III. A new direction for Nighthawk is also promised. Al Milgrom did the cover. [1/19]



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FANTASTIC FOUR No. 241, April. "Render Unto Caesar" is by John Byrne. The Black Panther returns to guest-star. Byrne and Terry Austin did the cover. [1/19]

IRON MAN No. 157, April. "Spores" is by David Michelinie, Alan Kupperberg and Bob McLeod. It's Iron Man vs. the Luddites, a bunch who wanna wipe out all technology. McLeod did the cover. [1/19]

MARVEL TEAM-UP No. 116, April. "Between Sword and Hammer" is by J. M. De Matteis, Herb Trimpe and Mike Esposito. The Valkyrie's Dragonsword grabs onto Spider-Man and won't let go. Thor guests as well. John Ramita Jr. and Bob Layton did the cover. [1/19]

MASTER OF KUNG FU No. 111, April. "Commit and Destroy" is by Doug Moench, Gene Day and Jack Abel. Shang-Chi must intercede when the Ghost Maker stalks the Queen. Day did the cover. [1/19]

PETER PARKER, THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN No. 65, April. "The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter" is by Bill Mantlo, Bob Hall and Jim Mooney. Kraven likes Calypso and to impress her he does what everybody does to impress a girl -- he vows to destroy Spider-Man. Hey -- I'd be impressed. Bob Layton and Joe Rubinstein did the cover. [1/19]

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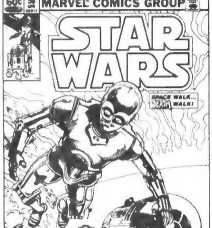
STAR WARS No. 58, April. "Sundown" is by David Michelinie, Walt Simonson and Tom Palmer. Leia and the droids plus most of the rebel fleet are drawn into the blazing sun. Simonson did the cover. [1/19]

WHAT IF? No. 32, April. "What If The Avengers Were the Pawns of Korvac" is by Mark Gruenwald, story and layouts, Greg LaRocque and inks by a whole bunch of people, each of whom inked the same character throughout. Galactus, the Watcher, the Celestials, the Stranger, the Grand Master and the High Evolutionary band together to save the universe. Bob Layton and Joe Rubinstein did the cover. [1/19]

MARVEL PAPERBACK No. 3 featuring STAR TREK. [1/21]

MARVEL PAPERBACK No. 4 featuring THE INCREDIBLE HULK. [1/21]



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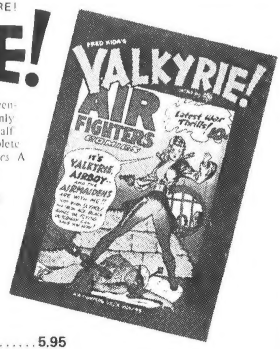

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